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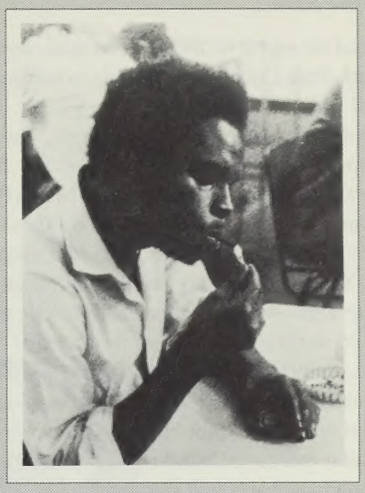
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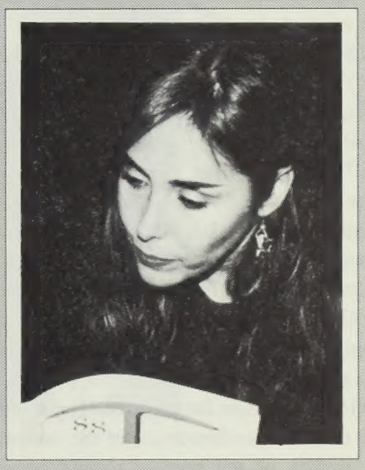
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27



35

**COVER:** In *Majdhar* (Mid-stream), a dramatic feature by the British collective Retake, a Pakistani woman is brought to England by her husband, then abandoned. For her, independence has previously been equated with Westernization, and she becomes torn between two ways of life. In "Recoding Narratives of Race and Nation," Kobena Mercer discusses how films such as *Majdhar* participate in contemporary British cultural politics.Mercer's article describes and analyzes the historical formation of black independent filmmaking in Britain,encounters with and challenges to the traditional "race relations" narrative, the development of a plurality of filmic styles by black British filmmakers, and other topics. Photo courtesy of the National Film Archive London.

## IN MEDIA RES

*To the editor:*

I read the report on the decision made by the New York State Council on the Arts to merge its Film and Media Programs ["NYSCA Creates Controversy over Media Program," in "Media Clips"] in the December issue of *The Independent*. As the former director of the Media Program, I am saddened and dismayed by these events. According to the report, the administrators at NYSCA say that they decided to merge the two programs—which represents a significant philosophical change—as a simple matter of practical neccessity to save one staff person's salary. Additionally, they say that this decision would not have been made had I not left the Council and that a similar merger of other programs at the Council might have happened if another program director had left instead. If this particular method of saving money continues, I worry about the long-cherished position of NYSCA as a visionary supporter of the arts. Above all, I am deeply concerned about the future of the Media Program. Almost as old as video art and a pioneer funder, the program has carefully nurtured video as art. It occupies an irreplaceable position in the history of video in this country and abroad.

While it was not mentioned in the report, I understand that Council officials credit me with the idea for this merger. I believe I should clarify the context. In August 1985, the year I joined NYSCA, I wrote a memo entitled "Media Arts in the Year 2000." Mary Hays, NYSCA's executive director, asked all program directors to write similar analyses. I recommended the merger of the Film and Media Programs by 2000. In my memo, I described what I saw as the merits in an eventual merger. I believed that, if carried out thoughtfully, this would not obliterate the differences between the two art forms but would enable the Council to respond more effectively to overlapping elements not to mention some administrative simplifications. However, I stressed the following: the budget for grant-making should not be less than the combined sum of the two programs; the timing of the merger should be carefully considered; and both fields—film and video—should be given ample opportunities to discuss all relevant issues and implications. Under no circumstances should such a merger have the appearance of the Media Program being folded into the Film Program; this should be a merger of two equal programs. I envisioned it as a positive expansion of film and video under dynamic leadership.

At the time of my departure from NYSCA, the Council proposed that my position be eliminated and the two programs merge. I was adamantly opposed. I argued that the time was not ripe and that, above all, the Council needed time to consult both fields. When the Council solicited applications for the Media Progam director's position, I was relieved. Naturally, the abrupt announcement of the merger took me by surprise and distressed me deeply.

I respectively submit that the process by which the decision was made and the reasons given for the decision fundamentally violate the merger I had in mind. I take pride in my association with the Council, and I hope that NYSCA will reconsider the Media Alliance's request, as described in *The Independent*, "to declare a moratorium on the merger and convene a deliberative body to review the decision."

*—Dai Sil Kim-Gibson*
Washington, D.C.

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THE INDEPENDENT

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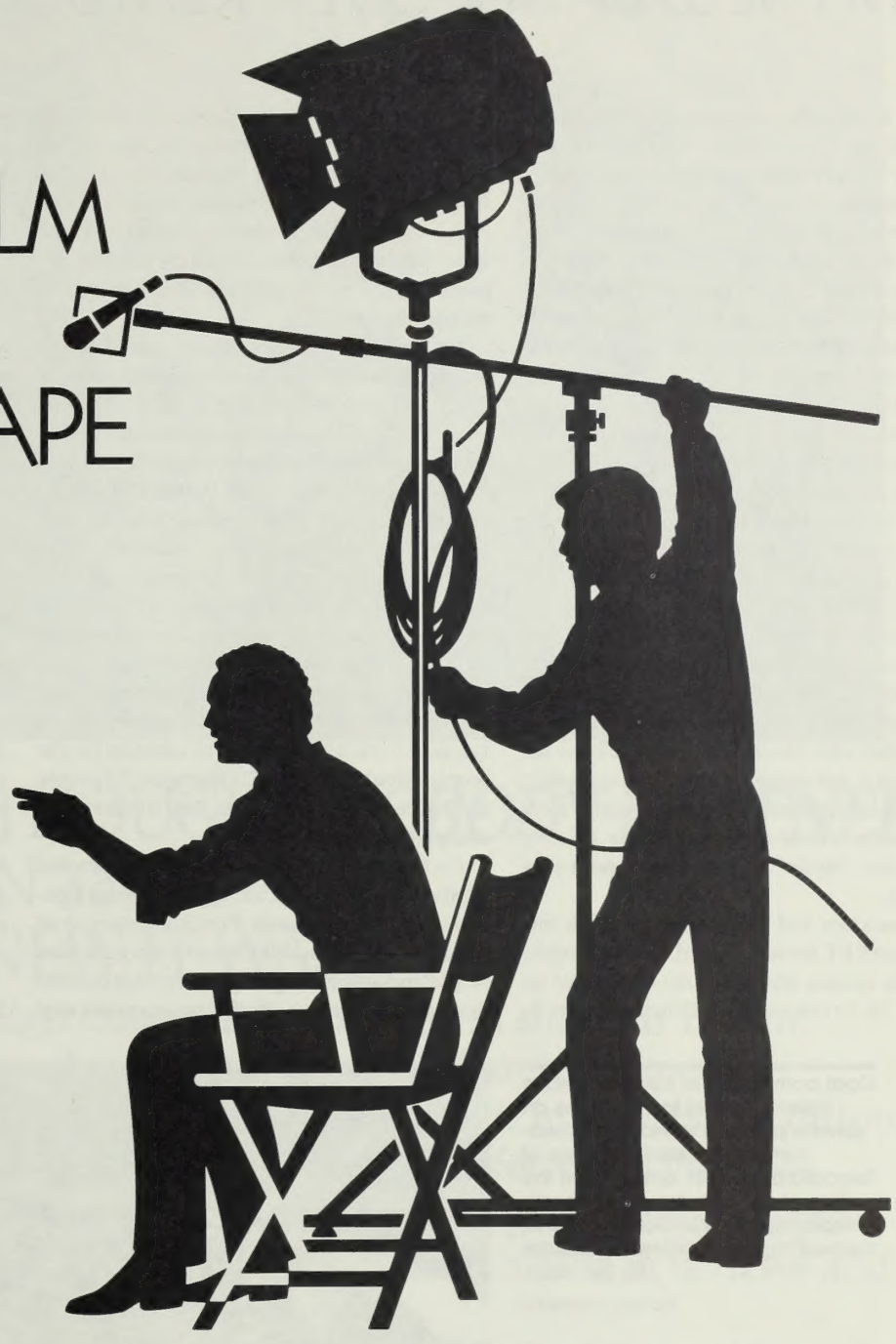
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# FILM FUELS BATTLE OVER KENTUCKY COAL

Midway through the documentary *On Our Own Land*, Sidney Cornett stands on a hillside and gloomily surveys the heap of dirt that was once a green pasture. Although he owns this land, he could not stop the coal company from strip-mining it. Like many Kentucky families, Cornett's ancestors signed a "broadform deed" around the turn of the century, selling the mineral rights for pennies an acre. Broadform deeds pre-date the development of strip mining, yet the Kentucky State Supreme Court has ruled twice in recent years that these deeds give coal companies access to the coal by whatever means.

While reclamation promises were made, "this pile of topsoil has been sitting here for four years, and you don't even see grass on it," Cornett tells the film crew from Appalshop, the media arts center in Whitesburg, Kentucky, which for 19 years has documented the history, social issues, and culture of Appalachia. As they talk, a van rolls up. A burly man in his fifties named Keith gets out and immediately knocks down the camera operator. Another man blocks Keith as he circles the camera crew and accuses Cornett of trespassing. A pick-up truck pulls up with two of Keith's men, who silently watch. Cornett manages to calm Keith down, but the confrontation is not easily forgotten.

Kentuckians had the chance to watch this scene when KET, the state-owned, statewide public television system, aired *On Our Own Land* on October 18. In one month Kentuckians were to vote on an amendment to the state constitution that would prohibit broadform deed strip-mining without the landowner's consent. Because the state legislature's unanimously passed statutes prohibiting broadform deed strip-mining had been struck down as unconstitutional by the state supreme court, a popular vote was needed to change the constitution.

*On Our Own Land*, by Anne Lewis Johnson and Appalshop staff, played a key role in alerting voters and attracting the interest of mainstream news media. Grassroots organizations, such as Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, actively canvassed for the amendment. But the KET screening of Appalshop's documentary was the first time the issue received in-depth, statewide media coverage. Most voters were not familiar with the issue, which directly effects only 10 out of the state's 120 counties. Another obstacle was the language of the amendment. According to Dee Davis, executive producer of Appalshop Films, "The ballot is written in horrible legalese. No one can read it, so it's necessary to translate for the people through the press." Otherwise, "if people don't understand a referendum, they'll vote against changing the constitution."

*On Our Own Land* was able to help turn this relatively obscure issue into a hotly debated election topic for two reasons. First is the strength of the tape itself. Alongside Cornett's story are tales of a businessman being dragged from his bed and thrown in jail because of refusing access to a coal company. An elderly widow recalls how she was told to move her husband's grave to make way for a mining site. Equally eloquent are the aerial shots of mountains defaced and shorn of their forests. Another factor was the controversy that blew up around *On Our Own Land*, generated by KET's decision to postpone its airing until after the election following pressure from the coal companies. KET quickly reversed its decision, but the surrounding hubbub put local journalists on the story's trail.

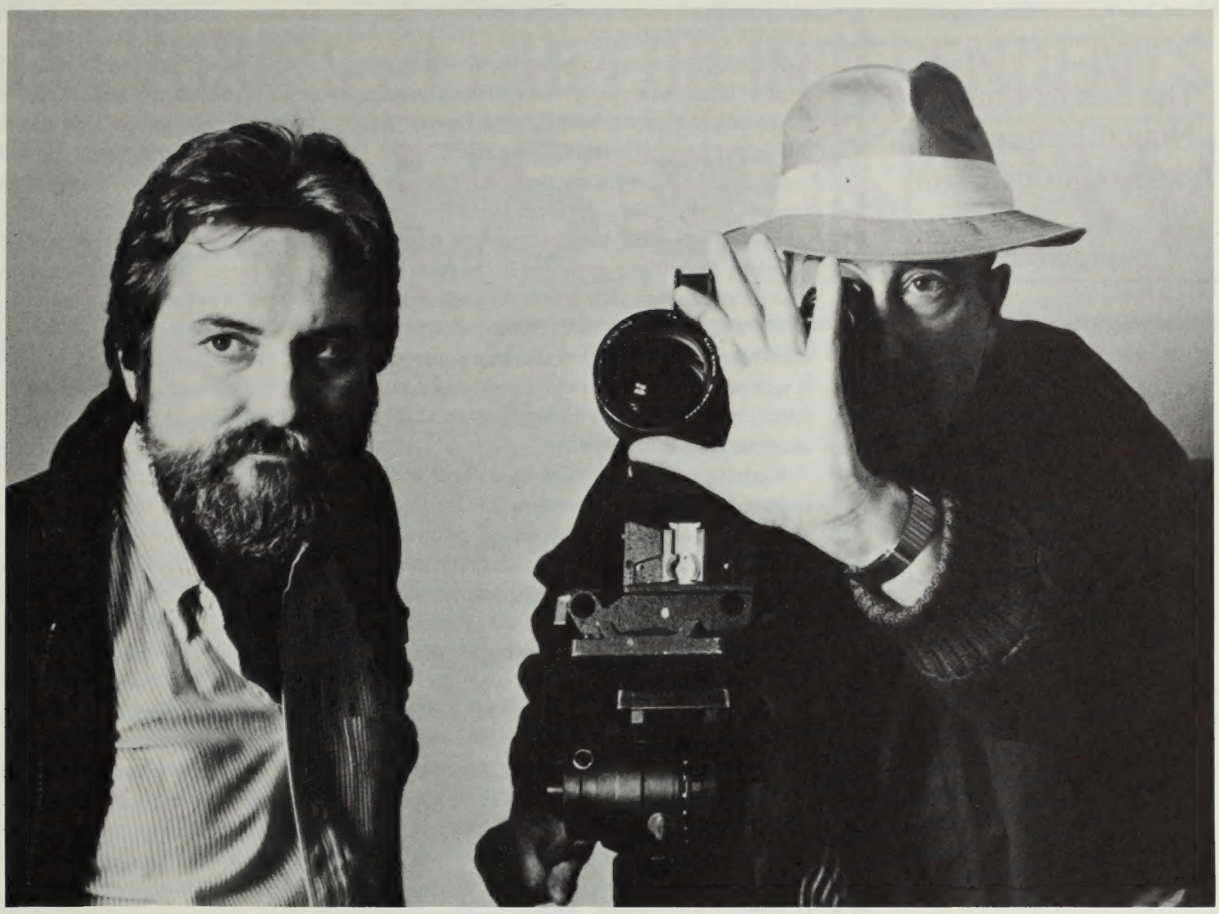
Originally, *On Our Own Land* was scheduled to air on election eve as part of Appalshop's primetime weekly series *Headwaters*. The timing was a coincidence that neither Appalshop nor KET noted—at least until some coal company executives, having received a flyer listing *Headwaters*' fall season, complained to KET's executive director, O. Leonard Press. Press questioned the station programmers, who in turn decided that an election eve broadcast would be unfair, leaving the coal industry no opportunity to respond. Acknowledging that the documentary allowed considerable airtime to coal industry heavyweights like Tom Duncan, executive director of the Kentucky Coal Association, KET nevertheless told Davis that the show was "too strong" to air on election eve. KET turned down Davis' proposal for a panel discussion following the screening.

The next day, Appalshop got a call from a Lexington newspaper reporter. Word was out that



**Coal companies in Kentucky have been allowed to strip-mine on private property without the landowners' consent because of "broadform deeds" dating from the turn of the century. Appalshop's documentary, *On Our Own Land*, helped trigger a statewide debate on the issue.**

Courtesy Appalshop



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the program had been rescheduled because of its content. Newspaper articles and editorials soon followed. The first editorial was in the Whitesburg paper. "In all these years, it was the first time they ran an editorial on our behalf," says Davis. "They clobbered the public television station."

"When the press got involved, KET decided to review their decision," Davis explains. He readily acknowledges KET has always been willing to run risky Appalshop programs in the past, in one case airing a show after receiving a bomb threat. KET's Press insisted that the postponement of *On Our Own Land* was not a censorship issue—since it was never *not* going to be aired—but a policy issue, concerning the decision to air an advocacy program on election eve.

Nonetheless, Press called on a panel of three journalism professors to review KET's decision. The panel unanimously agreed the film should not be shown on election eve but also found that "the film is too important a statement about an election issue to be completely withheld from Kentuckians. KET should consider broadcasting the documentary as soon as possible, but with the review panel's comments about its powerful slant, and with a half-hour following the film for those opposed to the Broadform Deed Amendment to present their point of view." KET promptly rescheduled *On Our Own Land* with a panel discussion for the following week.

Once the KET news story faded, however, the broadform deed issue managed to stay alive, actually snowballing during the three weeks between the telecast and the election. The coal industry launched a last-minute, quarter-million dollar media blitz, but to no avail. The Broadform Deed Amendment passed in every county, drawing 82 percent of the vote. What role did Appalshop's program play? In Davis' view, "A big part. Nothing is as effective as a huge grassroots organization, and Kentuckians for the Commonwealth had been working on this a long time. But what we did was take it into a public forum and let people get an understanding of the issue in moving pictures. We let them see the expanse of destruction and let the people talk who were directly affected, not just the usual bunch of lawyers and muckity-mucks. We gave a voice to the poor and the landowners."

Conventional wisdom among pundits and press about television's role in the elective process says that those with the biggest war-chests win. This year Kentuckians proved them wrong. Appalshop's film cost $25,000—a mere tenth of what the coal industry spent on its last-minute campaign. Their victory is one that goes beyond Kentucky's borders, providing an example to other grassroots producers and organizers.

PATRICIA THOMSON

## SEQUELS

The U.S. finally joined the **Berne Convention**, the 100-year-old copyright treaty between 76—now 77—countries ["The Limits of Copyright: Moral Rights and the Berne Convention," May 1988], when President Reagan signed legislation enabling this move in early November. A controversial provision allowing protection of artists' moral rights—recognized by all signatories of the Convention to date—was omitted from the version of the legislation that finally gained Congressional approval. In coverage of this news in the trade press, the reduction of piracy abroad is presented as the treaty's major impact.

□ □ □

In the protracted battle between cable operators and municipalities being waged in the U.S. district courts, the cable operators recently scored a victory ["Cable Feels the Heat," June 1988]. In *Century Federal Inc. vs. Palo Alto*, a judge for the Northern District of California ruled in October that the five percent **cable franchise fee** requested by Palo Alto was unconstitutional. Judge Eugene Lynch said that the fee "impermissibly discriminates against exercising protected First Amendment rights," as the city "singled out one class of users (of public rights-of-way), cable operators." The National Cable Television Association's response has been relatively subdued, owing to their reluctance to further strain relations between the cable industry and local municipalities and their fear that Congress might revisit the 1984 Cable Act.

□ □ □

The American Civil Liberties Union is preparing to file a lawsuit against the American Cablevision system in Kansas City, Missouri on behalf of the local branch of the **Ku Klux Klan** ["Sequels," October 1988]. The ACLU's draft complaint, charging infringement of the Klan's First Amendment rights to free speech on Kansas City public access cable, was initiated after the Kansas City local government passed a resolution that allowed the cable company to convert its public access channel into a local origination channel. The cable company then asserted its right to program the channel and denied the KKK access.

□ □ □

The elusive **American Cinemateque**, brainchild of ex-Filmex director Gary Essert, is now promised a home, according to the organization's newsletter ["Hollywood Babylon: The Filmex Story," April 1986]. Appropriately, the Cinemateque will be part of a complex surrounding the Chinese Theater on Hollywood Boulevard, dubbed the Hollywood Promenade. The Cinemateque will own a free-standing, four-story building within the development, where it plans to house "three state-of-the-art theaters, a multi-media lab, cafe-bar, bookstore, exhibition gallery, offices and study facilities." The $300-million real estate project is envisioned as one component of a plan for the revitalization of Hollywood and endorsed by Los Angeles city officials.

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The launch of the French telecommunications satellite, TDF-1, that seemed iffy a few months ago, was proclaimed successful in early November. The delays in the satellite's flight plan were not technical but economic; broadcasters have been reluctant to rent transponders at the high rates demanded by the French government agency responsible for the project. However, TDF-1 is the promised vehicle for **La Sept**, the public cultural channel that presently shares time with another channel on French TV ["Le PAF: The Changing French Audio-Visual Landscape," August/September 1988, and "Sequels," November 1988].

□ □ □

On November 11, when New York State's mid-year financial report was released, Governor Mario Cuomo announced that the state's previously projected budget deficit had grown to $1.9-billion from approximately $1-billion. This deficit is largely the result of a shortfall in anticipated tax revenues, due to changes in the Federal tax law of 1986. Cuomo instituted a hiring freeze and requested emergency budget cutting powers—a move the State Assembly is not expected to approve.

Earlier in the year, when a budget gap became apparent and, like other state agencies, the New York State Council on the Arts had to make budget cuts and faced a hiring freeze, this became the justification for **merging NYSCA's Film and Media Programs** ["NYSCA Creates Controversy over Media Program," December 1988]. The current hiring freeze, effective through the 1988/89 fiscal year which ends March 1, and the prospect of future cut-backs makes this merger appear all the more likely to take place, despite protests from New York State media artists and organizations.

## FIVF TAPE LIBRARY

The FIVF Festival Bureau has established a tape library of members' current works to expedite screenings for upcoming film and video festivals. Members interested in depositing their work in the library should contact: Kathryn Bowser, Festival Bureau director, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012, (212) 473-3400.

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# PRIMETIME ADVOCATES: THE BETTER WORLD SOCIETY'S DOCUMENTARY PRODUCTIONS



**Superstation TBS aired BWS' *Terror Trade: Buying the Bomb*, which claims that 2,500 drums of nuclear material were diverted to Libya and Pakistan in 1988.**

Courtesy Better World Society

Lorna Johnson

The internationalist impulses of media moguls can be used to consolidate profits or increase communications about global concerns. Credit Ted Turner, founder and CEO of Turner Broadcasting, with pursuing both. In June 1985, Turner founded the Better World Society, a nonprofit media organization that commissions, acquires, and coordinates the broadcast of documentaries on the nuclear arms race, world population, and environmental resources. BWS director Tom Belford explains, "We use TV in an advocacy mode. We want to use TV as aggressively as we can, less as an art form and more as a communications tool."

"Every major project has been a partnership with either a nonprofit group or non-U.S. broadcaster," Belford states, adding that foreign broadcasters often have more flexibility in programming than their U.S. counterparts. When asked about collaborations with U.S. broadcasters, Belford replies, "We have never been able to make the link. Our major hurdle is that we are a point-of-view organization." Recent BWS programs include a pre-election program about popular views on nuclear arms, entitled *Mandate for Mainstreet* and coproduced with the Union of Concerned Scientists. Another 1988 production, *Terror Trade: Buying the Bomb*, examines the black market trade in components used in the manufacture of nuclear weapons and was coproduced with Channel Fourin the U.K. The international birth control organization Planned Parenthood coproduced *Increase and Multiply*, which deals with population control in the Third World. *Only One Earth*, another BWS project, was coproduced with the British Broadcasting Corporation, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, and the Italian network RAI. It is an 11-part series exploring environmental issues which offers examples of how development can be accomplished without harming the environment.

Although Turner personally provided the seed money for BWS, the organization quickly developed other sources of support. In 1988, out of a $2-million budget, 10 percent came from Turner and the remainder raised from BWS' 26,000 members, private foundations, corporations, and contributions from wealthy supporters. Over the past three years, the organization has received support from approximately 20 foundations, including the W. Alton Jones Foundation, the George Gund Fund, the Rockefeller Family Associates, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Plough Shares Fund, and the Peace Development Fund.

Like its mandate, the board of directors of BWS is genuinely international, reading like a United Nations roster that includes former U.S. president Jimmy Carter, under secretary general of the United Nations Yasushi Akashi, former president of Costa Rica Dr. Rodrio Carazo, Norwegian prime minister Gro Harlem Brundtland, and Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, co-chair of the independent commission on International Humanitarian Issues. The main task of this group is to set priorities for BWS, which, in 1989, will be programs concerning the environment. They also lend their expertise to projects. For instance, Khan served as executive director and also provided part of the funding for *Terror Trade*.

It is the day-to-day work of BWS' staff of seven, however, that determines what specific programs will receive the organization's support. They select project ideas from the proposals sent by broadcasters and independent producers. According to Belford, "Eighty percent are from independent producers." Projects are also initiated by the staff. Since they do no production in-house, BWS frequently relies upon the contracted services of independents. "We are a vehicle that independent producers should be looking at to get their productions on the air," Belford says. In addition to acting as the agent for acquired programs, BWS contracted with independent

filmmaker Robert Richter to produce *Increase and Multiply*; Sherry Jones made *Mandate for Mainstreet*; and Rachel Lyon produced *Unfinished Symphony*, which commemorates scientific and cultural exchanges between the U.S. and the Soviet Union over the past 30 years.

The contractual agreements between BWS and producers vary. "If we commission a program outright, then we control all the rights," states Belford. If it's a partially funded product and, for example, BWS provides $30,000 finishing funds, then, he says, "that's a stickier issue." No matter what the agreement, he explains, "I'm demanding certain distribution rights." When *Dark Circle*—a program examining plutonium processing, nuclear weapons construction, and environmental contamination at the Rocky Flats plant in Colorado—was rejected by PBS after agreeing to the broadcast, BWS telecast it on WTBS. The producers were paid a license fee for that acquisition. In the case of *Women—For America, For the World*, one of three segments of the series *Ending the Nuclear Arms Race*, BWS provided money for promotion. After reading about the organization and its belief in advocacy television, Robert Richter contacted them. Months later he was asked to produce *Increase And Multiply*. Before he joined the production BWS had finished research for the program and some filming. Richter then took over. Since his role constituted work-for-hire, BWS retained the rights over final cut and the distribution of the material.



***Increase and Multiply*, directed by independent producer Robert Richter, was coproduced for television by the Better World Society, a nonprofit media organization created by Ted Turner. BWS supports documentaries on the arms race, world population, and environmental resources.**

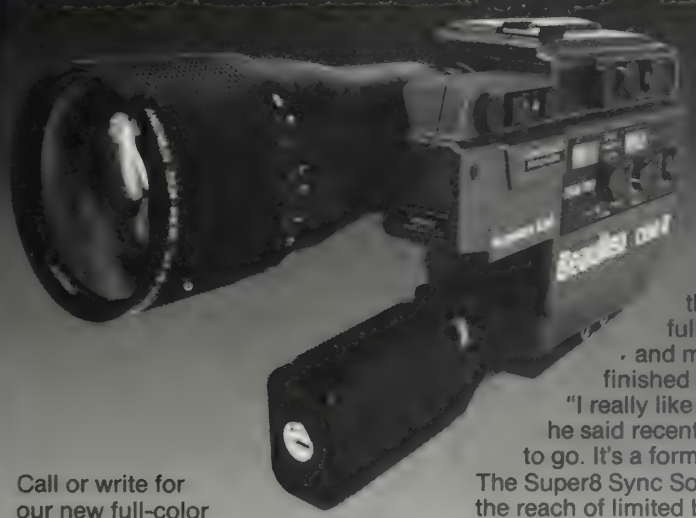
Courtesy Better World Society

When collaborating with foreign broadcasters like Channel Four and the BBC, BWS receives U.S. distribution rights and the U.K. rights go to the broadcaster. Whatever international sales result are split between the two producers. Belford explains that BWS uses various U.S. distributers for their programs because they prefer working with organizations that will promote a particular program most effectively. "We want to disseminate the message, not make off-air distribution a profit center," he says. To date the BWS has concentrated its distribution efforts on the Turner Broadcasting Station, the Discovery Channel on cable, and the Public Broadcasting Service. When shown on TBS, the superstation usually assumes the cost of promotion for the program, and most BWS programs are aired two or three times during primetime. *Women—For America, For the World* was aired three times during a two-month period, slotted after 10 p.m. and before 11. Along with telecasting their programs BWS distributes some on VHS at very inexpensive prices, ranging from $20 to $50 for the entire 11 parts of *Only One Earth*.

For more information about the Better World Society, contact them at 1140 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., Suite 1006, Washington, D.C. 20006.

*Lorna Johnson is a researcher for Film News Now Foundation and a freelance writer.*


# How Serious Can You Get In Super 8?



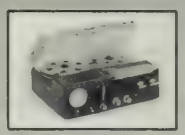
## Ask Mark Pirro!

***"Very serious, believe me!" he says. "My first feature was shot and edited in Super 8. It has been very successful in the video market and it really started me on my filmmaking career."***

According to Mark the training he got using the Super8 equipment prepared him for the opportunity to advance rapidly in a business that only talks to experienced professionals. He had the right stuff when the time came. He's now a working writer/director with a full-length feature in 35mm, (DEATHROW GAMESHOW) and more on the way. But . . . you guessed it . . . he's just finished another Super 8 feature, CURSE OF THE QUEERWOLF. "I really like the flexibility, economy and convenience of Super 8," he said recently. "On a limited budget, to get a film gloss, it's the way to go. It's a format that makes a lot of sense."

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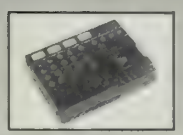
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# SUPER 8 SALVAGE: FINDING AND RESTORING USED FILM EQUIPMENT

Bob Brodsky

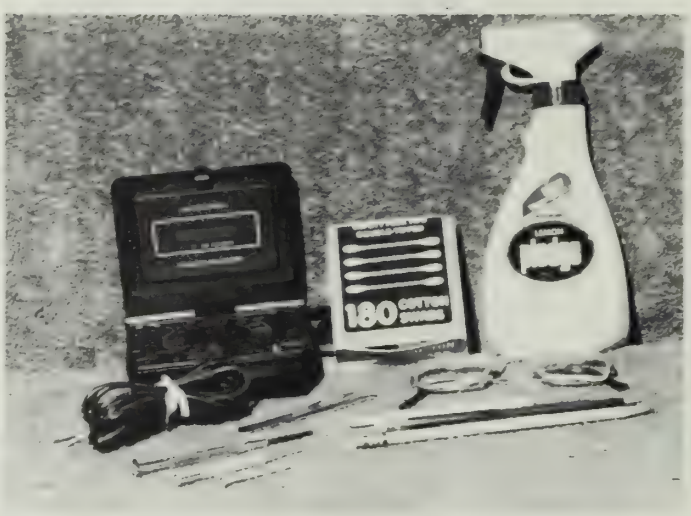
During a recent trip to New York City I was approached by several film teachers who are having an increasingly difficult time maintaining enough equipment to provide adequate experience for their students. Most teachers are reluctant to abandon hands-on classes in favor of purely theoretical instruction, so finding serviceable equipment of any age has become a necessary component of teaching film in all but the most affluent settings.

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Whatever spills out of the closet or tech room, some needed items will be missing: certain types of cameras, projectors, viewers, splicers, rewinds, sound recording and mixing paraphernalia. The search for viable used equipment begins with the question: Who has it? Travellers, hobbyists, and even veterans of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam have lots of small gauge equipment, which often hasn't been used for years. Go to their clubs: the fraternal, golf, tennis, boat, art, hobby, photo, travel clubs, or churches and synagogues. Post three-by-five cards requesting the equipment. Don't be too specific; say something like, "Wanted Old Movie Equipment, especially an 8 and 16mm film viewer" and add to your name "teacher." Go in person to post your card prominently on their bulletin board, but if you can't, mail it. Ask that your inquiry be published in a club's newsletter. Don't overlook the many corporations that have bulletin boards and newsletters for managers; make your needs known there. That may not be as much work as it at first appears.

Accept every donation, even if only of antiquarian interest. Acknowledge it on the phone and then in writing, saying you're searching for other items. Such correspondence may unearth something you really do need from a friend of the initial donor. Publish a telephone number where messages can be left for you.

If you have a budget for purchasing equipment, make sure that it applies to the purchase of used equipment as well as new. In institutions supported by public funds you may have to receive approval for purchases over a certain amount. Such oversight is supposed to insure that your purchases are at fair market value, which you can establish by keeping those who grant approval supplied with copies of *Shutterbug* magazine.*



**Basic film equipment restoration kit, including everything but lens tissue: small screwdrivers, fine point tweezers, pencil and ballpoint erasers, emery board, close-up glasses, volt and current meter, film path swabs, and wax.**

Photo: Bob Brodsky

Some teachers at tax-supported institutions are able to purchase used equipment on a regular basis by obtaining pre-approval within set limits, allowing them to comb flea markets, collectable shops, and the used equipment shelves of photo stores for needed items. Sometimes classified ads in the video sections of convenience store weeklies will pry old film equipment from camcorder enthusiasts. Small budgets can go a long way in acquiring used film equipment. And don't overlook suppliers of new equipment when seeking used equipment. Several names are listed at the end of this article.

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Once you've located the equipment, never put film—even a test film—into an uncleaned piece of equipment. A readily available home furniture wax, Johnson's Lemon Pledge, can be used to clean and lubricate film channels. It will not damage any plastic or metal surface (including audio recording heads), but keep it away from lenses and other optical parts. It eases the passage of film and helps prevent misregistration, jitter, and film damage. Corroded surfaces, such as battery terminals, need scraping and polishing with (according to the depth of corrosion) a pencil eraser, ball point pen eraser, very fine abrasive paper, or an emery board. Roller guides on sync blocks, film viewers, editing tables, tape recorders, and projectors can be set running freely with a dry spray Teflon lubricant, such as Elmer's Slide-All, available in hardware stores.

Lenses and lamp reflectors should be cleaned only with lens cleaning tissue and lens cleaning liquid (never use eyeglass wipes), available from photo stores. Re-lamp all old projectors and viewers. Replacement lamps are available and will put out a brighter, more even light. If the equipment is powered by ordinary flashlight batteries, purchase alkaline batteries for it (probably at discount from lamp suppliers). Alkaline batteries provide the added power to get neglected belt and gear drives turning smoothly. Run old cameras for short intervals at normal speed without film until they begin running smoothly. Then you are ready to begin testing them.

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Before put into actual use, cameras should be tested with film. One minute's worth of any type of handily processed film per camera will do, which means you will be able to test three cameras with a single spool or film cartridge.

You will be testing for at least three factors:

1. Even registration of the frames.
2. Even exposure from frame to frame.
3. Dependability of the auto exposure system, if the camera has one.
4. Satisfactory back focus, the camera's ability to render a sharp image at the film plane, especially if the camera has a zoom lens.

* *Shutterbug*, 5211 S. Washington Ave., Box F, Titusville, FL 32781; (305) 269-3211. Best listing of used photographic equipment (8mm, super 8, 16mm, still).

5. Sound quality of single system sound recording cameras

Frame registration is where the camera places successive frames in relation to the sprocket holes. If these regularly occur in the same place, the filmed images will be free from jitter. Begin this test by cleaning the camera gate with a few swipes from a clean old toothbrush or eyebrow brush and a puff of your breath to remove any debris caught in the camera gate. Then carefully load the film. On a piece of light or white cardboard (such as an opened file folder), take a broad marker and write something to identify this particular camera and the date. Place the cardboard in direct light, enough light to permit an exposure of about f/4 to f/5.6 when the cardboard occupies the bottom half of the frame and something else of a much darker tone occupies the top half. Put the camera on a tripod, if convenient, but hand-holding will suffice. Frame the image so that the cardboard extends below the bottom of the frame. If the camera has a diopter adjustment, set it by defocusing the lens and adjusting the viewfinder screen until it is as sharp as possible to your eye. If there is a split-image focusing screen, adjust it until the center-line etching is sharp. Then focus carefully on the image by zooming in (if the camera has a zoom lens) or by measuring the distance from the cardboard to where the film plane is in the camera and setting the lens accordingly. On a zoom lens camera set the focal length to widest angle.

If the camera has a microphone connection and you are testing with sound film, plug in a microphone of known quality (not the microphone that came with the camera unless you have tested it with a tape recorder and are satisfied with its quality). Place the mic at least six feet from the camera and, while running off 20 seconds of film, read something to be recorded on the sound stripe. Then disconnect the microphone and run off another 10 seconds without moving the camera. Use the remaining 30 seconds of the test to shoot five or six close-up scenes, both at telephoto and wide angle settings, in a range of lighting situations, remembering to focus carefully at full telephoto extension, and making sure any macro rings are turned off.

Project the processed film in a fully darkened room. Raise the frame line to see if it widens and narrows (the cardboard gets alternately wider and narrower top-to-bottom) or if a black frame line alternately appears and disappears. If so, the camera has a registration problem. If an otherwise fine camera appears to have a registration problem, do one more short registration test with it after having thoroughly cleaned the film channel again with Lemon Pledge Furniture Wax on a cotton swab. This procedure has saved more than one camera from the junk bin.

Be careful to distinguish camera misregistration from projector misregistration. Projector registration error is evident when the entire image on the screen jitters up and down. Camera registration error is evident when the frameline is


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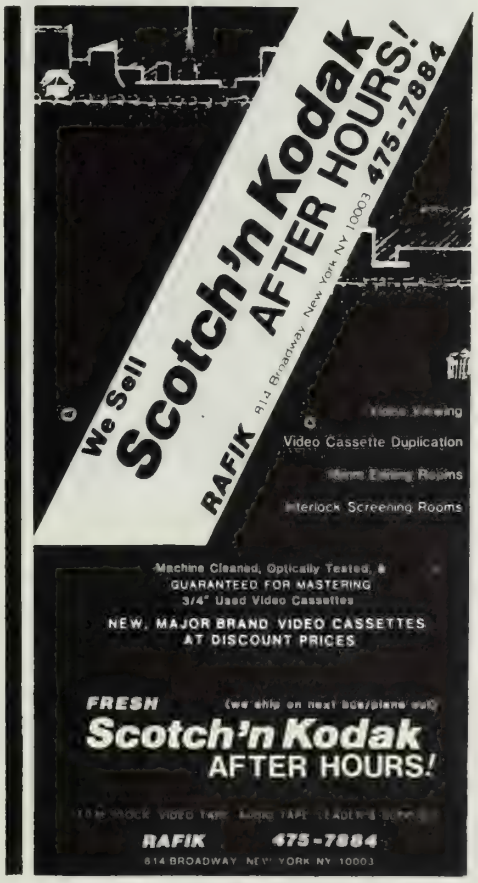
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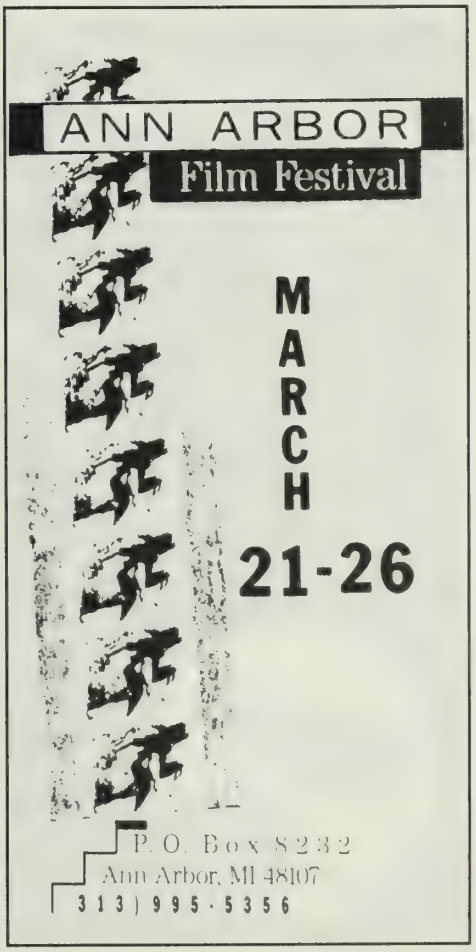
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raised onto the screen and the top and the bottom of the frame appear to jitter in opposing directions.

Projection will also reveal evenness of exposure between one frame and the next (indicating evenness of film transport) and auto exposure acceptability (indicated by overall correctness of the exposure of scenes). Uneven exposure of scenes produces an exaggerated flicker. Auto exposure problems are indicated by a variance in exposure from the beginning to the end of a scene. Most auto exposure systems take about one second to settle on the correct exposure. Usually, pressing the camera release slowly allows the correct exposure to be set before film rolls.

If the telephoto scenes are out of focus, it is probably due to a missetting of the eyepiece diopter, which will then give an incorrect indication of focus. If the wide angle scenes are out of focus, the back-focus is out of adjustment, or a macro focusing ring was in the wrong position. Proper back focus can only be set by a trained technician, preferably at a factory authorized shop.

The most common complaint about salvaged projectors and viewers is film scratching. Usually the scratches are caused by accumulated grit and bits of film, all of which can be removed by a careful cleaning with Lemon Pledge. Project your test roll repeatedly, looking for new scratches and abrasions on successive passes. Sometimes an errant tool has placed a burr on a roller or in the film channel. With a bright light and magnifier, search out the offending part, which will probably have some accumulation of film emulsion or base around it. Polish out the burr with a fine emery board, then clean and test again. There is an abrasive film that often works on this type of problem: Protect-o-Print leader (available from cine supply houses). Since it is abrasive on only one side, splice together two three foot lengths, one of them reversed, to polish both front and back of the film path. Protect-o-Print should not be used on projectors with magnetic sound heads that cannot be disengaged, since it abrades the audio heads. No matter how desperate you are for a projector, don't buy one in which you cannot get access to the entire film path for cleaning.

There are other projector and viewer ailments that have easy remedies. Uneven projector lighting can be adjusted out. To silence squeaks, spray dry Teflon lubricant around the moving parts and on belts after removing the lens and lamp and covering the reflector.

A common ailment that's harder to fix is hum in the audio. In optical sound, projector hum is generated by stray light falling on the sound pickup. Improve the light shielding around the pickup. In both optical and magnetic sound projectors improper electrical grounding of the circuits can cause varying amounts of hum. This is most frequent when the projector is connected to an external device, such as an amplifier that has its own AC power supply. Try removing the ground wire from either the projector or the amplifier.

Magnetic sound projectors create hum from magnetic fields set up by their own motors or power supplies. Moveable hum-cancelling wire coils are often placed near the sound heads. Moving them very slightly will often cancel almost all of the hum. Eumig, Kodak, and Elmo projectors all have hum-bucking coils for this purpose.

Motorized viewers tend to lose their switching capability after years of neglect. Spray the switches with TV tuner cleaner with lubricant (available from Radio Shack stores), being careful not to spray it on the optical parts. Then exercise the switch until the contacts are clean.

Correct cable connectors and connections must not be taken for granted in old equipment. It's easy to mistake an incorrect or different wiring of a connector for a broken wire. A monophonic connector will often connect with a stereo one, but the signal will pass intermittently. After you've sorted out these problems, spray the connectors' contacts with TV tuner cleaner.

Audio recorders associated with film equipment tend to suffer from neglect and can often be made usable with Teflon lubrication on moving parts and TV tuner cleaner on their contacts.

Teachers utilizing these techniques will find that a great deal of serviceable old filmmaking equipment can be resurrected, returned to the marketplace, and restored to provide many years of service for them and successive generations of students.

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Toni Treadway runs an informal, free clearinghouse for filmmakers looking for or trying to sell specific items. Call her, or leave a message at (617) 666-3372.

*Bob Brodsky is based in Somerville, Massachusetts, where he recently completed the third edition of* Super 8 in the Video Age, *coauthored with Toni Treadway.*

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# Trains, Boats, Planes,

## A Guide to Motion Picture Insurance

Renee Tajima

*[Author's note: This article is an overview only and touches on issues that frequently affect independent producers. Use the information presented here as a guideline when you work directly with a recognized insurance broker in purchasing the appropriate production package policy for your specific needs. This article is presented only for the purpose of educating independent film- and videomakers and is not to be taken as financial or legal advice.]*

THE PROSPECT OF BUYING MOTION PICTURE INSURANCE is something like personal health coverage. You'd be surprised how many people figure that if they're young, healthy, and cautious they needn't bother with the time and expense of researching and procuring an insurance policy. But, given the unpredictable nature of film- and videomaking, it pays to gamble on the side of protection. This article is a survey of the various types of insurance most commonly used in independent production, based on a seminar conducted by Bud Krause of D.R. Reiff & Associates insurance brokers and attorney Paula R. Shaap (available on tape from AIVF), as well as my own experiences as a producer.

Motion picture insurance is specialized, and only a handful of insurance carriers are experienced in providing this kind of coverage. It can cover everything from injured animals to defective videotape, all sizes of production from your first film to *The Last Emperor*. Not surprisingly, premiums and types of coverage vary accordingly. The most important first step is to work with a broker experienced in film/video production to fulfill your specific needs. These are very few—especially outside New York and California—so you may have to look for someone outside your area. Professional film and television reference books, such as *The Producer's Masterguide*, published by Shmuel Bension, provide names and contact information for brokers across the country. The broker is your connection to the carriers that underwrite motion picture insurance policies. In order to negotiate coverage and premiums, your broker will want a copy of a synopsis or script and will need details on the budget, payroll, locations, and cast. She or he will also require information on any unusual circumstances, hazards, or risks involved that would effect the premium, just as the Chicago Bears' insurer would take into account Jim McMahon's propensity for game injuries. In particular, my broker, Andrea Hess at Dewitt, Stern, and Guttman, cites "planes, trains, and boats" as red flags for carriers, and productions involving any of those tend to require higher insurance payments.

Most insurance companies will provide a customized production package that varies by your needs. The package policy eliminates protection "gaps" and duplication that may occur with different kinds of coverage, which, therefore, keeps costs down. The general categories of coverage are:

Basic to all types of productions (documentaries, dramatic, etc.), the following is generally purchased together as a production package policy—for example, there is only one carrier that will insure the negative alone:

- equipment insurance
- negative film and videotape insurance
- faulty stock, camera, and processing insurance
- property damage liability insurance

Also applicable to all types of productions are:

- worker's compensation
- comprehensive general liabilty and auto liability

For dramatic productions:

- cast insurance
- props, sets, and wardrobe
- extra expense

Productions distributed through television and theatrical release:

- errors and omissions

In addition, there is a whole array of additional coverage, particularly for larger dramatic productions, including animal mortality, bad weather, non-owned aircraft liability, watercraft liability, and unions and guilds flight accident insurance.

*CONTINUED ON PAGE 18*

# and Other Liabilities

## TYPES OF INSURANCE

**Equipment Insurance** Covers loss and damage to your own or leased equipment, including cameras, lenses, sound recorders, mics, lighting, editing equipment, grip equipment, and projectors.

**Negative Film and Videotape Insurance** Covers loss or damage to your film negative or videotape stock, exposed film, recorded videotape, soundtracks, and master tapes, up to the amount of the insured production cost.

**Faulty Stock, Camera, and Processing** Covers losses caused by fogging, light exposure, faulty camera or sound equipment, faulty raw stock, faulty developing, editing, and processing, or accidental erasure of videotape recordings. It does not, however, protect you against human error or inexperience on the part of you or your crew—for example, if your assistant camera exposes a roll of film through negligence.

**Property Damage Liability** Covers damages to property belonging to others that occur while you are using the property for your production. It also covers your loss of the use of the property. The owners of a location, prop or wardrobe companies, and the like will probably want to see your insurance certificate as a part of the rental agreement. In the case of a location, make sure you're contracting with the owner—or someone empowered to grant you use of the space.

**Worker's Compensation** Coverage for employees is mandatory in every state and applies to all employees, whether temporary or permanent. It provides medical, disability, or death benefits to cast or production crew members who becomes injured while employed by you. Employees are also covered on a 24-hour basis whenever on location away from home. Should such an injury or death occur and you do not carry this insurnace, you many have to pay penalties in addition to benefits required by law. Even if the cast or crew member is employed as a freelance, independent contractor or is a voluntary intern, he or she will probably be considered an employee by an administrative claims court. According to Bud Krause, how you pay that person, whether it's by check or simply lunch, does not have a bearing in worker's compensation claims. The state will consider them an employee if you "control, supervise, and direct their work; furnish the tools of the trade; and furnish or are responsible for the job location." A worker's compensation will cover your employees in every state regardless of where you hire them, with the exception of the six monopolistic states of Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, West Virginia, Wyoming, and Puerto Rico, which require that you purchase worker's compensation from their state governments if you hire local people.

**Comprehensive General Liability, and Auto Liability** Covers you against claims for bodily injury or property damage that happen during filming. Coverage may include the use of vehicles, both production and prop vehicles, including physical damage to them. This coverage is usually required before you are allowed to film on municipal and state roads or at any location that requires filming permits. The use of watercrafts or aircrafts—boats and planes—is not covered by this policy and must be insured separately. Also excluded here is errors and omissions coverage. General liability insurance should provide protection for "hold harmless" agreements you've made with other parties. For example, if you have agreed to protect the owner of a location against any claims by a third party from injury that occurs at the location while you are shooting, the policy will cover that agreement.

**Cast Insurance** Covers you for any extra cost necessary to complete principal photography if death, injury, or sickness befalls a performer or director. Anyone covered is required to take a physical examination before coverage is initiated, and you are responsible for the cost of these exams. Coverage usually begins two to four weeks before the beginning of principal photography.

**Props, Sets, and Wardrobe** Covers loss or damage during production on props, sets, scenery, costumes and wardrobe, and similar theatrical property. This may also include coverage for rental charges for replacement.

**Extra Expense** Reimburses you for any additional costs necessary to complete principal photography that occurs as a result of damage or destruction of property or facilities, such as props, sets, or the equipment used in your production. It may also cover losses due to generator breakdown.

**Errors and Omissions** Covers legal liability and your defense as well as indemnity for you against lawsuits over copyrights infringement, unauthorized use of titles, formats, ideas, characters, talent performances, plots, plagiarism, piracy, and unfair competition. The policy also protects against alleged libel, slander, defamation of character, or invasion of privacy. This coverage is usually required by a distributor before television or theatrical release. Errors and Omissions is an extremely expensive per project policy that may have to be renewed periodically—usually every three to five years—if your film or tape has a long life. In your application, you will have to warrant that all rights are cleared, including music, title, script, etc., and that all releases have clearances. An increasingly rare E&O policy is the Occurrence form, in which the carrier will provide coverage for claims made even after the policy expires, as long as the alleged damage occurred during your coverage. The more common type of policy is the Claims Made form, in which the carrier provides no coverage unless the claim is made during the policy period. E&O insurance is particularly onerous for independent producers distributing to public television, which requires E&O insurance but pays low or no broadcast fees that might help defray the cost of this insurance.

Premiums vary by budget size, deductible amounts, length of the production period, locations, the degree of danger, or the volume of hazardous activity involved. There is one thing you *can* depend upon: premiums are high. The insurance industry is a cyclical one, with purchase costs rising and falling over time. We are at the peak of one of the upswings, with premiums so high that it's setting off consumer revolts like the recent ballot proposition to lower auto insurance premiums in California. While working out a documentary budget of $350-450,000 this summer, Andrea Hess told me to estimate two to two and a half percent of the total budget for insurance. I've heard quotes of everywhere from two to six percent, depending on the scale of the production budget.

Minimum premiums make it necessary to take a bigger proportional slice out of lower budgets. For example, the minimum cost of $1-million in comprehensive general liability insurance is now around $2,500—an amount you might be required to pay for a $50,000 production or a $500,000 production. Hess has been able to get slightly lower premiums for short-term, extremely low-budget productions through carriers that don't normally handle film/video insurance under special projects coverage, but they still range around $2,000.

In some cases, it would be cheaper to buy blanket insurance that covers all your productions on an annual basis, rather than buying coverage per project and paying a separate minimum premium for each of those projects. For example, during the calendar year 1986, my partner Christine Choy and I were involved in three productions: we shot a short dramatic film, worked on editing and short pick-ups for a long-term documentary, and started production on a feature for foreign television. The budgets for the three productions ranged from $20,000 to $200,000. In January of that year, we gave our broker an estimate of what we thought our total outlays would be for the rest of 1986. Based on that estimate, we paid a premium deposit. In January 1987, the end of the premium period, the broker audited our accounts to determine if we actually spent more—meaning we'd owe an additional premium—or spent less, entitling us to a refund on the deposit. Keep in mind, refunds sound great but, because there is a minimum premium for any policy, it is not guaranteed that you will ever see one.

An independent production may take several years to complete, but you'll still want your negative or master insured during the entire period. In this case, although you aren't spending the entire budget in any single year, you'll probably end up paying the minumum premium on an annual basis anyway. (Keep in mind that negative insurance is almost always sold as a part of the whole production package policy and can't be bought separately.)

Even with blanket policies, your premium deposit can be raised during the year under special circumstances. In one year, we had a blanket policy covering $75,000 in estimated production costs, but a larger project came in at $200,000 so we had to buy additional coverage. Exclusions on your policy may also require additional premiums. Insurance coverage is generally worldwide, except for the common exclusion of war zones—and each carrier's interpretation of what is a war zone, Nicaragua or Lebanon, for example, may vary. Finding coverage for what is considered a dangerous location could mean big trouble and big expense. According to Hess, a last resort is Lloyd's of London (the people who insured Betty Grable's legs), but the premium might be prohibitively expensive.

**Deductibles** are applied on a "per occurrence" basis, meaning you can't group all your losses together but can only claim a loss for a single instance. When I was shooting a low-budget feature in Manhattan, our production van was broken into twice. The fact that the two losses combined—verified for the carrier by the police report—totalled about $200 more than the $1,000 deductible meant nothing. In order to receive a claim, one single robbery would have to produce over $1,000 in losses. We were "luckier" in Detroit, when robbed of over $10,000 in equipment and supplies in the parking lot of a hotel we were able to make a successful claim.

The deductible is an important factor in determining what kind of coverage you can afford to buy, especially for low-budget productions. Hypothetically, it would be wonderful to claim the $2,000 you lost paying salaries on your crew and actors when a snow storm postpones production for a few days. But, if the deductible is $10,000 and the carrier will only pay the portion of the claim over that amount, the cost of bad weather insurance might not be worth the expense. Of course, some types of coverage such as negative insurance is basic. Your equipment will probably be worth the cost of protection, and rental houses will either require that you insure their equipment or pay a fee to be covered by their own policy. Most municipalities require comprensive general liability insurance to shoot in public places (you *can* try stealing the shot, but insurance makes life easier with the local police and may get you generous parking privileges as well as insuring you against a law suit). New York City, for example, requires that you buy $1-million in comprehensive general liability and name the city as an additional insured on the policy. If you want to shoot in the subway system, the Metropolitan Transit Authority may also want to be named as an additional insured, thus raising the premium even higher.

**Claims** can involve an enormous amount of paperwork and patience. I know a lawyer who once told me a contract is only viable as long as it's too expensive to break. A cynical view of insurance companies is that they'll settle your claim only if you make it worth their while to do so. My own experience has ranged from satisfying to frustrating, depending on the carrier. Ironically, my worst experience was with the smallest claim: $133 for worker's compensation for a soundman, who accidentally cut his hand on a production binder. A year after I filed the claim, the insurer still hadn't honored it, and the soundman was getting chased by the hospital's collection agency. It took countless letters and calls to my broker's claim's department to finally settle the matter.

Because of the hassle inherent to making a claim, it's advantageous to have a broker and carrier who understands motion picture production and has a good reputation in the field. In some instances, the insurer is your ally against a third party. For example, if a passer-by is hit by a falling grip stand in the building hallway where you are shooting, the insurance carrier will not only pay damages but may pay your defense costs as well.

As the producer, it pays to be prepared. Carry copies of your policy and relevant forms, especially on location, and make sure your production manager or other appropriate staff does the same. Third parties such as locations, municipal authorities, and rental houses will want to see copies of the certificate. In the case of a robbery or accident, you'll want to refer to the policy and have the claim forms handy. When we were robbed in Detroit, I had detailed lists of all equipment and property we were traveling with, and bills of sale were handy in my office. Being a compulsive pack rat, I had kept all my receipts for personal items like clothing and was reimbursed for those losses through a combination of homeowner's insurance, auto insurance, and a lawsuit against the hotel where we were robbed.

Since independents often work on a small scale with tight budgets, it's helpful to be resourceful in piecing together coverage. For instance, it's likely that you and your crew will contribute your personal equipment, wardrobe, or props to the production and that you'll carry personal items on travel. High premiums and deductibles may make it prohibitive to buy coverage for this type of property, which would be considered minor to the insurer, although certainly valuable to you. As the result of my experience in Detroit, I realized that personal consumer coverage is often cheaper than professional insurance for filling these gaps. I pay a slightly higher fee for an American Express gold card and automatically receive collision damage coverage on rental cars—saving me the cost of the collision damage waiver offered by rental companies, which can run as high as $12 a day. The American Express coverage is for collision, fire, theft, and vandalism to the car. When using a credit card to buy airline tickets, I also receive additional insurance on luggage. Some car rental companies also offer coverage for theft to personal items for an extra fee.

With the complexity of insurance terms and the expense of coverage, it may be tempting for struggling independent film- and videomakers to avoid the issue altogether. But independent production is no less a business than widget manufacturing, and it's worth your while—and in some cases it's legally incumbent, for you—to purchase adequate coverage for your film and video projects.

1989 Renee Tajima

# Recoding Narratives of Race and Nation



Slide from *Expeditions: Signs of Empire/Images of Nationality* (1983), a slide/tape work by the Black Audio Film Collective

Courtesy filmmakers

Kobena Mercer

This article originates from my introduction to *Black Film/British Cinema*, a document in the Institute of Contemporary Art's series co-published by the British Film Institute in November 1988. The publication stems from a conference on the development of black independent filmmaking,[1] and, in addition to contributions from Stuart Hall, Colin McCabe, Judith Williamson, and others, the text includes a dossier of articles and statements from critics and filmmakers which unravel the controversial reception of recent films like *My Beautiful Laundrette*, *The Passion of Remembrance*, and *Handsworth Songs*.

Although black British filmmaking constitutes a small body of work, the prolific new wave of black independent film has raised crucial issues around the cultural politics of race and nation, identity and representation. Speaking from the "margins," this articulates fresh perspectives on questions that become central motifs in our so-called postmodern concerns. This article offers a description of the context of oppositional production in which black filmmaking has developed since the 1960s and seventies. Focussing on the politics of race and representation involved in the displacement of dominant codes and narratives, it discusses how black film-texts have actively contributed to (rather than merely "reflected") the public dissensus and debate on the meaning of Britishness as a contested identity and as a site of contestation.

The sheer range of conflicting views and opinions surely indicate that something important is going on. Take the case of *Handsworth Songs* (dir. John Akomfrah, 1987), Black Audio Film Collective's documentary-essay on the civil disobedience that erupted in reaction to the repressive policing of black communities in London and Birmingham in 1985. On one hand, the film received critical acclaim and won many prizes, including the prestigious Grierson Award from the British Film Institute. On the other, one reviewer in a black community newspaper, *The Voice*, received the film with the dismissive remark, "Oh no, not another riot documentary," and in *The Guardian* the film was subject to a serious and fierce intellectual polemic from novelist Salman Rushdie. Whereas the filmmakers conceived their experimental approach to the documentary genre as a strategy "to find a structure and a form which would allow us the space to deconstruct the hegemonic voices of British television newsreels,"[2] Rushdie argued that, on the contrary, "the trouble is, we aren't told the other stories. What we get is what we know from TV. Blacks as trouble; blacks as victims."

What is at issue goes beyond a dispute over the merits of one particular film. The contradictory reception of *Handsworth Songs* is but one aspect of the growing debates that have focussed attention on issues of race and ethnicity in film and television during the eighties. Other filmmaking groups such as Ceddo, Sankofa, and Retake have also been at the center of recent controversies arising out of the cultural politics of black representation. Sankofa's innovative dramatic feature *The Passion of Remembrance* (dir. Maureen Blackwood and Isaac Julien, 1986) interlaces a rendition of black family life around its central character, Maggie Baptiste, with a series of fragmented reflections on race, class, gender, and sexuality as issues demanding new forms of representation. Yet in pursuit of such forms, the mixture of conventional and avant-garde styles in the film has bewildered




***Pressure* (1974), Horace Ove**
Courtesy National Film Archive London

audiences and critics, black and white alike. Retake's first feature, *Majdhar* (dir. Ahmed Jamal, 1984), revolves around a young Asian woman whose "independence" brings conflicting choices and options, and for this reason the film provoked intense criticism not only within Asian communities here in Britain, but across the front pages of the national press in Pakistan. Ceddo, an Afro-Caribbean workshop based in London, has produced a documentary on the 1985 "riots"—*The People's Account* (dir. Milton Bryan, 1986)—yet although the film was financed by Channel Four and scheduled for a slot in the *People to People* series, it has still not been screened on television, as the Independent Broadcasting Authority has demanded editorial changes which the filmmakers regard as tantamount to state censorship—a demand which they have resisted.

These developments have taken place in the independent sector, on the fringes of mainstream film culture, but the controversies are of a piece with the contradictory reception of *My Beautiful Laundrette* (dir. Stephen Frears, written by Hanif Kureishi, 1985). As a relatively low-budget independent production, partly funded by Channel Four, this film took many by surprise with the unexpected scale of its popularity. Few would have anticipated that a gay romance between a British-born Asian and an ex-National Front supporter, set against the backdrop of Thatcherite enterprise culture, would be the stuff of which box office successes are made! Yet it is precisely this "crossover" phenomenon—whereby material with apparently marginal subject matter becomes a commercial success in the marketplace—that pinpoints shifts on the part of contemporary audiences.

In the case of *My Beautiful Laundrette* one would also need to account for the fact that, despite its success, different audiences actively disliked the film—and did so for very different reasons. Among the Asian communities, angry reactions focussed on the less than favorable depiction of some of the Asian characters which, when read as emblematic of the community, were seen as reinforcing certain ethnic stereotypes. Writing in the January 10, 1988, issue of the *Sunday Times*, Oxford history professor Norman Stone, on the other hand, singled out *Laundrette* and *Sammie and Rosie Get Laid* in his appraisal of British cinema for portraying a "negative image" of contemporary England. Stone regarded the films as inherently "disgusting" and symptomatic of the artistic and economic "sickness" of the British film industry, which he traced to the malignant influence of "left" intellectuals from the 1930s and sixties. In counterpoint, one example of "good" British filmmaking that Stone selected for praise was *A Passage to India* (dir. David Lean, 1987), an epic adaptation of the literary classic reframed for cinema in what has become known, after the success of television dramas such as *Jewel in the Crown* (Granada TV, 1983), as the "Raj nostalgia mode."[3]

What is at issue here is not simply that different readers produce contradictory readings of the same cultural texts or that an ethnically diverse society throws up conflicting ideological viewpoints. More fundamentally, this critical exchange highlights the way image-making has become an important arena of cultural contestation—contestation over what it means to be British today, contestation over what Britishness itself means as a national or cultural identity, and contestation over the values that underpin the Britishness of British cinema as a *national* film culture.

## HISTORICAL FORMATION

The public profile of black independent filmmaking today might give the impression that this is a "new" area of activity which only began in the eighties. But it did not. Filmmakers of Asian, African, and Caribbean descent, living or born in Britain, have been a part of the black arts movement since the 1960s. The previous "invisibility" of black filmmaking reflects instead the structural conditions of marginality which have shaped its development. An indication of just how recently conditions have changed can be gleaned from the fact that *The Passion of Remembrance* and *Handsworth Songs* were the *first* black-directed feature films to begin theatrical exhibition at a West End London venue, a standard rite-de-passage in film culture. This shows how far things have come since the mid-seventies when Horace Ove's *Pressure* was the first black feature film to be made in Britain or the early sixties when the very first films by black directors were made by Lionel Ngakane and Lloyd Reckord. But, it also indicates how far conditions have yet to change before black film is regarded as an integral aspect of British cinema. The story of its development so far must be told, as Jim Pines has argued, as a struggle against conditions of "recurrent institutional and cultural marginalization."[4]

As an industrialized art form, filmmaking involves a complex division of labor and intensive capital investment and funding: therefore, the crucial issue for black filmmakers has been access to resources for production. "Independent" filmmaking is usually taken to refer to production outside the commercial mainstream, which is dominated by multinational capital and the profit motive. Although the term is something of a misnomer, for as James Snead remarks, "independent" film is often highly *dependent* on funding from public institutions, it could be said that black filmmaking has been "independent" by default as the struggle for access has been engaged on both fronts. The commercial marketplace has provided employment for a few individual filmmakers but not a secure environment for black filmmaking as a cultural movement. Rather, the grant-supported or subsidized sector has provided the context in which black filmmaking has grown. Yet even here black filmmakers have had to struggle to secure their rights to public funding. As a result of this, alongside the general struggle to establish and secure black rights, what has changed in the past decade is the institutional recognition of black people's rights to representation within film culture.

The eighties have inaugurated shifts in the policy and priorities of cultural institutions in the public sphere, and this has helped to widen opportunities for access to production. These changes in the institutional framework of funding have expanded the parameters of the black independent sector and opened up a new phase which contrasts starkly with the conditions under which the pioneering generation of black filmmakers worked. The earliest films—*Jemima and Johnny*, by Lionel Ngakane, and *Ten Bob in Winter*, by Lloyd Reckord (both made in 1963)—were produced without the support of public funds. Like Ove's first films, *Baldwin's Nigger* (1969) and *Reggae* (1970), they were largely financed by the



***Burning an Illusion* (1981), Menelik Shabazz**
Courtesy Third World Newsreel

filmmakers themselves, who often demonstrated entrepreneurial flair by raising money from unlikely sources.

Ove's first feature-length film, *Pressure*, marked a turning point in 1974, as it was the first film by a black director to be financed by the British Film Institute. The BFI's production of *A Private Enterprise*, a dramatic feature set in the Asian community co-written by Dillip Hiro in 1975, and *Burning an Illusion*, made by Menelik Shabazz in 1981, signalled growing institutional recognition of black filmmaking within the terms of "multicultural" funding policy. Yet although this recognition drew black filmmakers into the context of the subsidized independent sector, marking an advance from the previous period, the time interval between productions and the comparatively modest budgets of the productions themselves suggest that, even within the terms of "official" multicultural policies, black filmmaking remained marginal in relation to the general growth of the independent sector during the 1970s.

Various factors contributed to the shifts of the eighties which, if they can be traced to a single source, occurred outside the institutions of British society in the political events of 1981: "riots" or "uprisings," the term varies with your viewpoint. Over and above their immediate causes as a response to new, quasi-military forms of policing in the Thatcherite era, the events had the symbolic effect of marking a break with the consensus politics of multiculturalism and as such announced a new phase of "crisis-management" in British race relations. In the wake of *The Scarman Report*,[5] political expediency—the need to be seen to be doing something—was a major aspect of the "benevolent" gestures of many public institutions, hurriedly redistributing funding to black projects. Politically, the eruption of civil disorder expressed protest at the structural marginalization of black voices and opinions within the polity and encoded militant demands for *black representation* within public institutions as a basic right. Culturally, this demand generated a veritable renaissance of black creativity—from literature, music, and theater to photography, film, and video.[6] In relation to audiovisual media in particular, this surge of activity coincided with the advent of Channel Four, which proved to be crucially important for black filmmakers and audiences alike.

It has been said, apropos the economic decline of the British film industry in the post-war period, that "British cinema is alive and well and living on television," as TV has provided a unique point of entry into the profession for many writers and directors. With its official mandate to encourage innovative forms of program-making, Channel Four contributed significantly to the expansion of the independent film production sector. The Channel was also mandated to provide for the unmet needs of various "minority" audiences, and, as a new model of public service broadcasting which explicitly recognized the diversity of audiences in a plural society, its responsibility for "multicultural" programming aroused high expectations about black representation. Early programs like *Eastern Eye* and *Black on Black* received enthusiastic welcome from Asian and Caribbean audiences, primarily because they filled some of the gaps—the absence of black images—in the more entrenched tradition of public service which assumed a single, mono-cultural "national" audience.

However, while Channel Four brought TV into line with the ethos of multiculturalism, the multicultural consensus was itself being thrown into question by more radical aspects of black politics and its cultural expression in the arts. Criticisms were made of the "ghettoization" that circumscribed such "ethnic minority" slots on Channel Four. Indirectly, this led to the formation of numerous black independent production companies with the aim of delivering alternative films and programs to television.[7] Similar critiques were voiced by the independent filmmakers' lobby and the women's lobby, and, alongside these, the Black Media Workers Association formed in 1982 to campaign for an equal distribution of employment and commissions. The BMWA's objectives shifted from the monitoring role of earlier initiatives such as the Campaign Against Racism in the Media[8] and were oriented towards pragmatic concerns such as ensuring access to independent production.

At another level, these developments were inscribed as a political shift from multicultural to anti-racist policy. In relation to the local state this process was led by the radical Labour administration of the Greater London Council between 1982 and its abolition, as a result of central government legislation, in 1986. Beyond mere expediency, the GLC took up demands for black representation in political decision-making and opened up a new phase of local democracy involving constituencies marginalized from parliamentary politics. At a cultural level, the GLC also inaugurated a new attitude to funding arts activities by regarding them as "cultural industries" in their own right. Both of these developments proved important for the burgeoning black independent film sector, particularly for the younger generation of filmmakers who formed workshops.

By prioritizing black cultural initiatives either by direct subsidy or through training and development policies (as well as numerous public festivals and events), the GLC marked a break with the piecemeal and often patronizing funding of so-called "ethnic arts."[9] Emphasizing broadly educational objectives, the GLC's extensive black and Third World film exhibition programs, such as Third Eye in 1983, were also important as they brought a range of new or rarely seen films into public circulation. The Third Eye symposia in 1985 gathered together filmmakers from Britain, the U.S., Africa, and the Indian subcontinent to map out an agenda for alternative interventions in production and distribution and highlighted, on one hand, common experiences of marginalization and, on the other, the impact of black and Third World feminism on issues of representation.[10] Like the conference on Third Cinema: Theories and Practices, held at the Edinburgh Film Festival in 1986, such events have placed black British filmmaking within an international context and helped to clarify the innovative qualities that differentiate black independent film from the "first cinema" of the commercial mainstream and the "second cinema" of individual auteurism.[11]

At the same time, however, such events have also brought to light important differences within the black British filmmaking community. In one sense, these differences concern the diverse ideological emphases and aesthetic strategies pursued by black filmmakers in the eighties, but they are also structural in nature and stem from the different modes of production of



***Territories* (1985), directed by Isaac Julien, a member of the Sankofa film and video collective**

Courtesy Third World Newsreel

workshops and production companies. Independent production companies —which include Anancy Films, Azad Productions, Kuumba Productions, Penumbra Productions, and Social Film and Video, for example—operate within the orbit of the television industry and as such compete in the marketplace for commissions and finance for individual productions. Workshops on the other hand—such as Black Audio, Cardiff Film and Video Workshop, Ceddo, Macro, Retake, Star, and Sankofa—are grant-supported and operate in the public sector context of subsidized independence. Whereas the former tend to adhere to the professionalized codes of mainstream working practices, often revolving around the individual director or producer, the workshops are committed to "integrated practice," which entails activity around areas of training, education, developing audience outreach, and networks of alternative distribution and exhibition as much as producing films themselves, often through collectivist working methods. In this respect, the workshops have been enabled by a unique trade agreement between the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians (the filmmakers' union) and a range of public institutions including Channel Four (the Workshop Declaration, established in 1982), whereby groups involved in such cultural activities and with a minimum staff of four can be accredited or franchised and thus receive financial support.

Arguments have raged over which mode of production offers a greater degree of autonomy and independent decision-making. Production companies may claim that by working within conventional patterns, black filmmakers can negotiate a wider potential audience and thus overcome the risk of "ghettoization." Workshops, on the other hand, have argued that "integrated practice" makes the development of a distinct black film culture possible and thus allows black filmmakers the space in which to address issues of concern to black audiences as a specific "community of interest" and the space in which to explore black aesthetics. The debate is by no means resolved. In any case, it should be noted that the arguments are of a piece with the different tendencies within the independent sector generally: the work of an independent director such as Ken Loach contrasts with the more "oppositional" orientation of the workshop movement which began with groups such as the London Film-Maker's Co-op set up by Malcolm LeGrice and others in the mid-1960s. With regard to the specificity of black filmmaking, however, it is important to recognize that the emergence of workshops has widened the range of issues that black practitioners have been able to take on, bringing questions of audience and distribution into the arena of funding and development. In contrast to previous periods, the structural shifts of the eighties' have diversified the range of ideological and aesthetic options for black independent film practices. It is this qualitative expansion of approaches to representation that informs the intensity of the debates on aesthetics in the contemporary situation.

## DISPLACING THE BURDEN OF REPRESENTATION

Culturally, definitions of "independent cinema" embrace such a variety of specific traditions—from combative documentary in the Third World or counter-informational video newsreels addressing local/regional community audiences to Euro-American "art" cinema or formalist experimentation, accommodated in rarefied art galleries and museums—that its coherence as a classificatory term seems questionable. This is especially so when it comes to black independent film in Britain, as each of these traditions are relevant to the "hybridized" cultural terrain in which it has evolved. In addition there is another problematic area of definition concerning the use of the term "black" as a political, rather than racial category. Throughout the seventies and eighties, the rearticulation of this term as an inclusive political identity based on alliances between Asian, African, and Caribbean peoples in a shared struggle against racism has helped to challenge and displace commonsense assumptions about "blackness" as a fixed or essential identity.

A grasp of both these areas of contested definition is necessary for an understanding of the cultural struggle around the social production of imagery that black filmmaking has engaged. In this sense it would be more helpful to emphasize the "oppositional" aspects of both terms so that rigidly essentialist or normative definitions may be avoided in favor of a relational and contextual conception of black independent film as a kind of counter-practice that contests and critiques the predominant forms in which black subjects become socially visible in different cultural forms of representation. A consistent motivation for black filmmakers has been to challenge the predominantly stereotypical forms in which blacks become visible either as "problems" or "victims," always as some intractable and unassimilable Other on the margins of British society and its collective consciousness. It is in relation to such dominant imagery that black filmmaking has brought a political dimension to this arena of cultural practice. And it's from this position that adequate consideration can be given to questions such as whether a distinctly *black* visual aesthetic exists or not, whether realism or modernism offers the more appropriate aesthetic strategy, or whether black film can be exhaustively defined as that produced "by, for, and about" black people. To begin to clarify what is at stake, it would be relevant to start with the question of stereotyping as this has formed the background against which recent debates have highlighted the complexity of race and ethnicity vis-à-vis the politics of representation.

Through a variety of genres, from dramatic fiction to reportage and documentary, black filmmakers have had to contend with the ideological and cultural power of the codes which have determined dominant representations of race. Stereotypes are one product of such audiovisual codes, which shape agreed interpretations of reality in a logic that reproduces and legitimates commonsense assumptions about "race." More broadly, in the struggle against the hegemonic forms of racial discourse supported by racial and ethnic stereotypes, black film practices come up against the master codes of what Jim Pines describes as the "official" race relations narrative. Within the logic of its narrative patterns, blacks tend to be depicted either as the source and cause of social problems—threatening to disrupt moral equilibrium—or as the passive bearers of social problems—victimized into angst-ridden submission or dependency. In either case, such stories encode



***Handsworth Songs* (1986), directed by John Akomfrah, a member of the Black Audio Film Collective**

Courtesy Third World Newsreel

versions of reality that confirm the ideological precept that "race" constitutes a "problem" per se.

From films of the colonial period, such as *Sanders of the River* with its dichotomy of "good native"/"bad native," to films of the post-war period of mass immigration and settlement, such as *Sapphire* or *Flame in the Streets* which narrate racial antagonism in a social realist style, the predominant forms of racial representation in British cinema and television have produced a "problem-oriented" discourse.[12] In seeking to find a voice and a means of cinematic expression able to challenge and displace the authority of this dominant discourse, black filmmaking has negotiated a specific, if not unique, set of representational problems that constitute a particularly difficult "burden of representation." To evaluate how different filmic strategies have sought to unpack this burden we need to examine the contradictory effects of realism and how this impinges on the cinematic investigation of the contradictory experiences of black British identity.

A cursory overview of black films made in Britain would show the preponderance of a "documentary realist" aesthetic in both dramatic fiction and documentary films. This emphatic insistence on the "real"—often expressed as a desire to "correct" media distortions and "tell it like it is"—should be understood as the prevailing mode in which a counter-discourse has been constructed against the dominant versions of reality produced by the race relations master narrative. From a context oriented point of view, the "reality effect" so powerfully conveyed by documentaries such as *Step Forward Youth* (dir. Menelik Shabazz, 1977) and *The People's Account* (Ceddo, 1986) is an important rhetorical element by which the "authority" of dominant media discourses is disrupted by black counter-discourse. Furthermore, within campaigning or counter-informational documentary, such as *Blood Ah Go Run* (Kuumba Productions, 1982), issues of form are necessarily and justifiably subordinate to the conjunctural imperative to interrupt the dominant racial discourse. Thus it could be argued that the operation of four filmic values within this mode of practice—transparency, immediacy, authority, and authenticity (which are aesthetic principles central to the realist paradigm)—constitute the means of encoding alternative forms of knowledge to "make sense" of processes and events from a black perspective. In this sense the focal concern with the politicizing experiences of black youth in films from the seventies demonstrates a counter-reply to the criminalizing stereotypes of dominant media discourses which amplified "moral panics" around race and crime.

Similarly, a film such as *Blacks Britannica* (made in 1979 by David Koff for an American TV company, WGBH-Boston, but cited here as it is widely read and circulated as a film encoding a black British perspective) interrupts commonsense understandings of race by "giving voice" to those silenced and marginalized by dominant versions of reality. Like *Riots and Rumours of Riots* (dir. Imruh Bakari Caesar, 1981), the combination of oral testimony, didactic voiceover, and political analysis advanced in the films by black activists and intellectuals presents an "alternative definition of the situation" and one that emphasizes the historical legacy of imperialism and colonialism as a factor in Britain's recurrent crises of race relations. The oral histories of black community life in four British cities offered by *Struggles for the Black Community* (dir. Colin Prescod, 1983 and produced by the Institute of Race Relations) cut across the dehistoricizing logic of the race relations narrative which seems to be premised on a "profound historical forgetfulness...a kind of historical amnesia...which has overtaken the British people about race and Empire since the 1950s."[13]

In such instances, then, documentary realism has had an overdetermined presence in framing black versions of reality: the "window on the world" aesthetic does not perform the naturalizing function which it does in broadcast news. Rather, by encoding versions of reality from black viewpoints, it renders present that which is made absent in the dominant discourses. As a conjunctural intervention, the use of documentary realist conventions empowers the articulation of counter-discourse. Yet, as Pines notes, although perspectives coded as "black" at the level of reference and theme differentiate such work from dominant discourse, at the level of film-form and cinematic expression these films often adhere to the same aesthetic principles as the media discourses whose power and ideological effects they seek to resist. Pointing to the relational nature of this constitutive paradox, Pines argues that

> This is also one of the ways in which black films are marked off from other kinds of independent work, because institutionalized "race relations" has a marginalising effect structurally and tends to reinforce rather than ameliorate the "otherness" of the subject—which documentary realism historically and representationally embodies. Within this set of relations, therefore, it has been difficult for black practitioners to evolve a cinematic approach which is unaffected by the determinants of "race relations" discourse or which works outside documentary realism.[14]

The contradictory effects this gives rise to can be appreciated mostly in relation to narrative fiction as the aspiration to authenticity or "objectivity" entailed by realism becomes more problematic when brought to bear on the contradictory *subjective* experiences of black British identity. Narrative closure, the tying up of the threads that make up a fictional text, is regarded as characteristic of cinematic realism, but the symptomatic irresolution of the story told in *Pressure* suggests some of the limitations of documentary realism in the attempt to recode the race relations narrative.

The film's central protagonist, a British-born black teenager, becomes increasingly disillusioned as he realizes that racial discrimination prevents him from attaining conventional goals and expectations, such as a career. The youth becomes estranged from his parents, who believed that because he was born in Britain he would have the advantage of being able to "assimilate" into British society. He drifts into street corner society and after an encounter with the police he joins his Caribbean-born brother in a separatist "Black Power" organization. The plot describes the politicization of his identity or, rather, a growing awareness of the contradictions inherent in the very idea of a black British identity where, ideologically, society regards the two terms as mutually exclusive.

In presenting this dilemma in dramatic form *Pressure* constructs an important statement, but in the telling, in its mode of enunciation through documentary realism, the linear development of the story recapitulates the themes of "inter-generational conflict" and "identity crisis" established by

the epistemology of the classic race relations narrative. We are left with an angst-ridden black subject, pathologized into a determinate non-identity by his very marginality.

As Pines has argued, the narrative logic in *Pressure* remains within the problem-oriented discourse of both social realist drama and race relations sociology. Consequently, the dream sequence at the end of the film, when the youth enters a country mansion and sadistically stabs the carcass of a pig, and the final scene of a protest march outside a courthouse in the rain evoke not only the impotence or hopelessness of a politicized black identity but a certain powerlessness on the part of the film itself, as if it cannot find a successful means of escaping from the master codes that circumscribe it. Ove's rendition of a hostage scenario that occurred in the mid-seventies, *A Hole in Babylon* (BBC, 1979), also conveys a pessimistic view of black protest politics. But the crisis of narrative resolution in *Pressure* should not be attributed to its author; on the contrary it must be read as symptomatic of a heroic, but compromised struggle with the master narrative of race relations discourse.

In subsequent black narrative fiction films we see the development of different modes of storytelling within this problematic of "identity." *Burning an Illusion*, by Menelik Shabazz, narrates a black woman's awakening sense of black consciousness as she discards the signs of her colonized self —"Mills and Boon" novels and a straightened hairstyle—to rediscover her "roots" and a politicized self-image. While the linear plot and mode of characterization are similar to *Pressure* (as the central protagonist is taken to embody a general or "typical" experience), the shift of emphasis from black/white confrontation to gender politics *within* a black community setting displaces the binary polarization in which black identity is reactively politicized by its "opposition" to white authority alone. By the same token, because the woman's transformation is narratively motivated by her boyfriend's encounter with police and then prison, *Illusion* has been criticized for presenting what is really a male-oriented idea of black women's experiences as the female protagonist is at all times *dependent* upon the "politicizing" role of the male character.[15]

The elision of specificity in the pursuit of "authenticity" within documentary realism also affects Retake's first feature film, *Majdhar* ("midstream"). The story concerns a young woman brought to England from Pakistan by her husband, who then abandons her and thus throws her into a complex set of choices. The protagonists speak with neutral accents, an important aspect of the characterization and chosen by the filmmakers to preempt the "goodness, gracious me" Asian stereotype. Yet, paradoxically, this seems inadvertently to confirm the "torn between two cultures" thesis which implies that, for Asian women, independence is synonymous with Western, or in this case English middle-class, culture. What is at stake in each of these films is a struggle to retell stories of black British identity, whether set in Asian or Afro-Caribbean contexts, within a code or a language which positions that identity as a "problem."

Sankofa's feature film *The Passion of Remembrance* marks a turning point, not because it transcends this problematic but because it self-consciously enunciates an explicit attempt to break out of the constraints of the master code. The "slice of life" drama that unfolds around the Baptiste family is coded in realist fashion, but, by foregrounding conflicts around gender and sexuality from black feminist and gay perspectives at the level of character, the story dismantles the myth of a homogeneous "black community" and emphasizes the plurality of identities within black society. The family drama is cut across by a dialogue between the emblematic black female and male figures which takes place in an abstract space: along with the "scratch video" footage that features in the realist sequences, the effect is to disrupt conventions such as narrative continuity. In the process, the layering of diverse rhetorical and textual strategies thematizes the question of memory in shaping political identities, calling up images of previous symbols in black politics to challenge the latent heterosexism of certain cultural nationalist discourses in the present.

The plurality of filmic styles and ways of seeing not only deconstructs the aesthetic principles of documentary realism but reflexively demonstrates that the film, as much as its subject matter, is a product of complex cultural construction. The break with naturalistic conventions in *Passion* should not be read, within this synoptic and summary overview, as a sign of teleological "progress"; rather, its significance is that, along with documentary-texts such as *Territories* (dir. Isaac Julien, 1985) and *Handsworth Songs*, its cinematic self-consciousness demonstrates a conception of representation not as mimetic correspondence with the "real" but as a process of selection, combination, and articulation of signifying elements in sound and image. This is certainly informed by the aesthetic principles of modernism (and as such, inscribes the influences of an engagement in theories and methods available from an education and training in British art schools, polytechnics, and universities), but it would be reductive to compare the new film-language experiments to earlier black films in a rigid "realist/modernist" dichotomy.

Rather, as the choral refrain in *Territories* implies—"We are struggling to tell a story"—what is at issue is a widening range of strategic interventions against the master codes of the race relations narrative. These are brought to bear on the same sets of problems, such as "identity," but articulated in such a way as to reveal the nature of the problems of representation created by the hegemony of documentary realism in racial discourse. Indicatively, collage and intertextual appropriation feature significantly in the more recent films whose formal strategy critiques rather than confirms the modernist tenet of pure formalism. Because the self-reflexive qualities of films like *Passion* or *Territories* are specifically oriented and directed to problems of racial representation, they implicitly critique the celebration of cinematic abstraction that characterizes aspects of the Euro-American avant-garde. In this sense, as critiques of modernism, the films are of a piece with the deconstructive impulse that figures in various aspects of postmodernism. As Dick Hebdige suggests,

> In films like *Handsworth Songs* and *Territories* the film-makers use everything at their disposal: the words of Fanon, Foucault, CLR James, TV news footage, didactic voiceover, interviews and found sound, the dislocated ghostly echoes of dub reggae, the scattergun of rap—in order to assert the fact of difference.... Deconstruction here takes a different turn as it moves outside the gallery, the academy, the library to mobilise the crucial forms of lived experience and resistance embedded in the streets, the shops and clubs of modern life. Deconstruction here is *used* publicly to cut across the categories of 'body' and 'critique,' the 'intellectual' and 'the masses,' 'Them' and 'Us,' to bring into being a new eroticised body of critique, a sensuous and pointed logic—and to make it bear on the situation, to make the crisis speak.[16]

Thus *Territories*, for example, which begins as a documentary "about" Notting Hill Carnival as a phenomenon of diaspora culture, appropriates the subversive logic of Carnival itself to creolize and effectively "carnivalize" the filmic text. The fragmentary collage gives rise to a surplus of connotations not as textual "free play" but as a hybridized mode of enunciation that returns again to the topic of identity and self-image. In this way, the film foregrounds the complex intersections of "difference"—racial, sexual, gendered, class-based, ethnic—as the unstable terrain on which identity is constructed; the image of the two youths embracing while the Union Jack burns in the background replays the antimonies of black Britishness as merely one ambivalent identity amongst others. Similarly, the carnivalesque transcoding of found footage in *Handsworth Songs* subverts the linear logic of narrative closure by invoking multiple chains of semantic association in a dream-like manner that engages the spectator, affectively and cognitively, in a "critical reverie."

The dialogic tendencies that inflect aspects of these films implies an awareness that the struggle to find a voice does not take place on a neutral or "innocent" cultural terrain but involves numerous modes of *appropriation* that dis-articulate and re-articulate the given signifying elements of hegemonic racial discourse.[17] In this sense, this kind of cultural practice celebrates the "in-between-ness" of the black British condition, not as pathology but as a position from which critical insight is made possible. Theoretically, this implies an epistemological break with sociological orthodoxies, a cut in the race relations master narrative, that reveals the productivity of the historical collision of cultures that Homi Bhabha describes as "hybridity" and which Paul Gilroy discusses in terms of syncretic forms of cultural production specific to diasporean conditions of



***Passion of Remembrance* (1986), directed by Maureen Blackwood and Isaac Julien of Sankofa.**

Courtesy Third World Newsreel

fragmentation and displacement.[18] And, without constructing a monologic opposition between the old and the new in black filmmaking, it is precisely the variety of representational strategies in contemporary practices that begins to dismantle the burden of representation. As John Akomfrah of Black Audio Film Collective describes it:

> Almost everybody who works here has in many ways been influenced by or has engaged with or has been genuinely interpellated by a whole series of film-making discourses, some European, some Third World, others British. I think what one attempts to do is to reformulate the filmic agenda, in which the strategy simultaneously undermines and inaugurates a new black cinema; where it is apparent that questions of anger or of reflexivity are not enough; that the moral imperative which usually characterises black films, which empowers them to speak with a sense of urgency, that one needs a combination of all those things to speak of black filmmaking.[19]

The variety of filmmaking strategies today—made possible by shifts at the point of production and funding—is important because the rationing of resources plays a decisive role in determining the cinematic qualities of a film. The aesthetic traits that figure prominently in black filmmaking are not determined by the artistic consciousness of the author(s) alone, but by extra-textual factors such as budgets and funding. The contemporary diversification of aesthetic forms entails the awareness that the rationing of funds imposes a double bind on black creativity: because access and opportunities are regulated, such that films tend to get made only one at a time, there is an inordinate pressure on each individual film to be "representative" or to say as much as possible in one single filmic statement. This precisely is the "burden of representation" succinctly pinpointed by one of the characters in *Passion* who comments, "Every time a black face appears on the screen we think it has to represent the whole race," to which comes the reply, "But there is so little space—we have to get it right." Martina Attille explains the nature of this dilemma as it arose in the making of *Passion*:

> There was a sense of urgency to say it all, or at least to signal as much as we could in one film. Sometimes we can't afford to hold anything back for another time, another conversation or another film. That is the reality of our experience—sometimes we only get the *one* chance to make ourselves heard.[20]

What is at issue is a question of power, a question of *who* has power over the apparatus of image-making.

As Judith Williamson noted in her review of *Passion* , "The more power any group has to create and wield representations, the less it is required to *be* representative." This concerns the politics of marginalization in the struggle for access to production, for, as Williamson adds, "the invisible demand to 'speak for the black community' is always there behind the multiculturalism of public funding."[21] There is, in effect, a subtle "numbers game" in play: if there is only *one* black voice in the public discourse, it is assumed that that voice "speaks for" and thereby "represents" the *many* voices and viewpoints of the group that is marginalized from the means of representation in society. Tokenism is one particular effect of this state of affairs: when films are funded with the expectation that they "speak for" a disenfranchised community, this legitimates institutional expediency (it "demonstrates" multiculturalism) *and* the rationing of meager resources (it polices a group's social rights to representation). The very notion that a single film or cultural artifact can "speak for" an entire socio-ethnic community reinforces the perceived marginality and "secondariness" of that community.

What is at stake is the way in which the discursive parameters and enunciative modalities of black cinematic expression have been regulated and "policed" by hierarchic relations between "minority" and "majority" discourse. In legal terms, a "minor" is a subject whose speech is denied access to "truth" (children cannot "give evidence"); like an infant (literally, without speech), a social minor has not acquired the right-to-speak. The sometimes paternalistic attitudes which have underpinned that parsimony of multicultural funding police black filmmaking in much the same way: as "ethnic minority arts," black films have been funded and thus black filmmakers have been given the right-to-speak, with the implicit expectation that they "speak for" the community from which they come. The critical difference in the contemporary situation thus turns on the decision to speak *from* the specificity of one's circumstances and experiences, rather than the attempt, impossible in any case, to speak *for* the entire social category in which one's experience is constituted.

Certain dialogic tendencies which foreground the mode of filmic enunciation—specifying "where" the films are speaking from—threaten to overturn or at least destabilize the way in which black film discourses have been policed by the burden of representation. And, as Stuart Hall points out, this involves the reconsideration of "ethnicity" as the acknowledgement of the contextual and historically specific place from which one speaks. It undermines the transcendental and universalist claims of Western discourses which arrogate for themselves the right-to-speak on behalf of all of us, while marginalizing and repressing those voices that speak from its margins into ethnic particularism. Within the British context, the hybridized accents of black British voices begin to unravel the heteroglossia, the many-voicedness and variousness of British cultural identity *as it is lived*, against the centrifugal and centralizing monologism of traditional versions of national identity.

## "THINK GLOBAL, ACT LOCAL"

This process of potential relativization is particularly important today precisely because traditionalism is being called upon in contradictory ways to stabilize the "imagined community" of the nation as it moves into a post-consensus, post-industrial era. In 1982, the popularity of *Chariots of Fire* (loosely alluded to and parodied in Ove's *Playing Away*) sent its producers to Hollywood with the belligerent marketing cry—"The British are coming!"—echoing the patriotic theme of the movie itself. In the same year,

in the wake of inner-city riots, the "put-together" Anglo-nationalism so readily and sordidly invoked in the Falklands War showed how durable the grand narratives of Empire still are.

The fact is that traditional ideologies of race and nation are not being disengaged gracefully: indeed, the culturalist discourse of the "new racism" and the sophisticated defense of the ethnicity of Englishness developed by intellectuals of the new right, from Enoch Powell to Roger Scruton, demonstrates that the understanding and representation of British history is now a crucial site of cultural contestation. The renewed fascination with the exotic landscapes of the post-colonial periphery—India, Africa, Australia—that features so prominently in mainstream cinema in the eighties, suggests a remythification of the colonial past.

This itself is contradictory as the renewal of a characteristically English discourse of liberalism in films like *Cry Freedom* cannot be collapsed together with the exploitation of these imaginary spaces of the Third World as a backdrop for routine romance and adventure in films like *Out of Africa* and *White Mischief* (*sic*). As an intervention in this conjuncture of images, the dialogic recoding of race, nation, and ethnicity in black British cultural production helps us make "good sense" out of a bad situation. In the context of the post-riots, post-miners' strike, post-welfare state society of the present, the questioning of national identity from the margin interrupts, like a spoke in the wheel, the recentering of cultural identity in popular culture and populist mobilizations.

However, like all sectors of independent oppositional production, the future of radical black practice is uncertain. The Thatcher Government's impending legislation on the deregulation of public service TV (which has been so essential for independent filmmaking) is likely to bring about a short-term expansion of opportunities. But, without the "protection" that the public service ethos provides, a nonregulated market would clearly threaten to reghettoize black and other minority cultural voices firmly back into the margins. Moreover, the authoritarian reregulation of media "standards," with the avowed commitment to censorship, promises even further contradictions. How the filmmakers negotiate survivability, how diverse audiences take up their work, and how public funding institutions adapt to the Realpolitik of cultural diversity are just some of the questions that will affect the future of black British film. Perversely enough, one of the most worrying issues becomes: Which parts of our national audiovisual culture do we want to preserve, conserve, and defend against the encroaching law of the marketplace?

*Kobena Mercer has contributed reviews, reports, and articles on black film to* Screen, New Socialist, *and* Undercut. *He coordinated the Black Film/British Cinema conference and has coedited a recent issue of* Screen, *entitled* The Last "Special Issue" on Race?.

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## NOTES

1. Black Film/British Cinema was held on February 6, 1988, at the Institute for Contemporary Arts and sponsored by the Production Division and former Ethnic Advisor of the British Film Institute. The title, incidentally, was derived from a day event organized by Peter Hames at Stoke Regional Film Theatre in November 1987.

2. Reece Auguiste, "Handsworth Songs: Some Background Notes," in *Framework*, No. 35, 1988, p. 6.

3. See Salman Rushdie, "The Raj Revival," *Observer*, April 1984; reprinted in John Twitchin (ed.), *The Black and White Media Book* (Trentham Books, 1988), p.130; and Farrukh Dhondy, "Ghandi: Myth and Reality," in *Emergency*, No. 1, 1984.

4. Jim Pines, "The Cultural Context of Black British Cinema," in Mbye Cham and Claire Andrade-Watkins (eds.) *BlackFrames: Critical Perspectives on Black Independent Cinema* (MIT Press, 1988), p.26. This publication was produced as part of Celebration of Black Cinema, a program featuring a range of black British film, held in Boston, April 1988.

5. Like the Kerner Commission of 1968, which influenced his recommendations, Lord Scarman offered a reading of the Brixton riots as caused by social disadvantage.

6. An overview of black arts in the eighties is provided by Kwesi Owusu (ed.), *Storms of the Heart: An Anthology of Black Arts and Culture* (Camden Press, 1988).

7. For a critique for Channel Four's initial entertainment and current affairs programs addressed to the Afro-Caribbean communities, see Paul Gilroy, "Bridgehead or Bantustan?," *Screen*, Vol. 24, Nos. 4-5, 1983.

8. See Phil Cohen and Carl Gardner (eds.), *It ain't half racist mum* (Comedia/Campaign Against Racism in the Media, 1982). For reflections on a BBC *Open Door* program produced by CARM, see Stuart Hall, "The Whites of Their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and the Media," in Bridges and Brunt (eds.), *Silver Linings* (Lawrence and Wishart, 1981).

9. Funding policies in relation to the black arts movement are critically examined in Kwesi Owusu, *The Struggle for Black Arts in Britain* (Comedia, 1986).

10. The event, organized by Parminder Vir and and coordinated by June Givanni, is documented in *Third Eye: Struggle for Black and Third World Cinema* (GLC Race Equality Unit, 1986).

11. For two conflicting accounts of the event, see my report in *Screen*, Vol. 27, No. 6, 1986 (reprinted in *The Independent*, April 1987) and David Will's report in *Framework*, Nos. 32/33, 1986. The rather ethnocentric views expressed in the latter are the subject of a counter-reply in Clyde Taylor, "Eurocentrics vs. New Thought at Edinburgh," *Framework*, No. 34, 1987. Proceedings from the conference will be published in Jim Pines and Paul Willemen (eds.), *Third Cinema* (British Film Institute [forthcoming]).

12. See Jim Pines, "Black in Films: The British Angle," in *Multiracial Education* (Special Issue on Race and the Media), Vol. 9, No. 2, 1981. The analysis of ethnic stereotyping is also discussed by Homi Bhabha in his influential essay, "The Other Question: The Stereotype and Colonial Discourse," *Screen*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 1983.

13. Stuart Hall, "Racism and Reaction," in *Five Views on Multiracial Britain*, Commission for Racial Equality, 1979, p. 25; see also, Stuart Hall, "The Whites of their Eyes,"*op. cit.*

14. Jim Pines, in *BlackFrames*, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

15. See Sally Sayers and Layleen Jayamanne, "Burning an Illusion," in Charlotte Brundson (ed.), *Films for Women* (British Film Institute, 1986). See also Martine Attille and Maureen Blackwood, "Black Women and Representation" in the same volume.

16. Dick Hebdige, "Digging for Britain: an excavation in seven parts," in *The British Edge* (Institute of Contemporary Arts, Boston, 1987).

17. I have drawn on Bahktin's concept of dialogism, developed in *The Dialogic Imagination* (University of Texas, 1981) in my essay, "Diaspora Culture and the Dialogic Imagination: The Aesthetics of Black Independent film in Britain," in *BlackFrames*, *op. cit.* See also, on the range of arguments around aesthetics, contributions to *Undercut*, No. 17, 1988, from the Cultural Identities conference held at the Commonwealth Institute in March 1986.

18. Bhabha's concept of "hybridity" is developed in "Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority Under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817," in Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (ed.), *Race, Writing and Difference* (University of Chicago, 1988). Gilroy's discussion of syncretism and diasporean culture is developed in *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (Hutchinson, 1988), see especially Chapter 5, "Diaspora, Utopia and the critique of capitalism."

19. In Paul Gilroy and Jim Pines, "Handsworth Songs: Audiences/Aesthetics/Independence," Interview with Black Audio Film Collective, *Framework*, No. 35, 1988, p. 11.

20. In "The Passion of Remembrance: Background," *Framework*, Nos. 32/33, p. 101; reprinted in *Black Film/British Cinema*.

21. *New Statesman*, December 5, 1986.

# IDENTITY CRISIS: THE LESBIAN AND GAY EXPERIMENTAL FILM FESTIVAL



***Decodings*** **was one of two films by Michael Wallin presented at the second New York Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival.**

Courtesy filmmaker

Tom Kalin

In darkened auditoriums we learn the cool protected distance of the voyeur, while at home, in living rooms, we learn the intimacy of TV as furniture and friend. In the movies (and at home) we are shown a parallel world in which we are merely disembodied viewers, essentially invisible, spectators to a narrative in which we can effect no change, merely watching the inevitable progression to resolution whether we like it or not. Often we see no one remotely like ourselves, and we learn that some people never make it into the frame. A Queer Kind of Film: The Second Annual Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival provided an opportunity to interrupt our viewing habits and consider the politically necessary but troublesome question of a "homosexual identity"—gay or lesbian. For the so-called general population—that mythical group the mass media claims to address—the question of a gay presence, if asked at all, appears irrelevant. For the rest of us, the experience of reading the words "general population" coupled with recent legal actions—such as the 1986 Supreme Court decision that upheld state laws criminalizing sodomy—compels us to represent ourselves lest we disappear altogether.

Organized by writer Sara Schulman and filmmaker Jim Hubbard, the festival featured 62 films by 58 filmmakers, playing to packed houses for six nights at the Millennium Film Workshop in New York City's East Village. Structured roughly according to thematic and formal categories, the event's 12 programs—each one-and-a-half to three hours in length—constituted less a curatorial statement than an attempt to make a range of work visible. The 1988 festival was only the second edition of this unique event and the addition of a panel discussion provided a sorely needed public forum, tackling the thorny question, "Does radical content require radical form?" Barbara Hammer, who moderated the panel of filmmakers Abigail Child, Tom Chomont, Su Friedrich, and Hubbard, equated experimental filmmaking with an "experimental lifestyle" and assigned an innate radicality to both. In a similar vein, Schulman and Hubbard stated in their program notes, "The experimental process mirrors, in many ways, the process of understanding a gay identity." Any such discussion however, enters tricky terrain since neither experimental film nor identity are stable entities, but rather, unstable, susceptible to change, determined by the specific social and political conditions in which both are formed. Even to speak of a "gay identity" is for the most part a First World privilege, and such discussion can easily overshadow the equally important aspects of class, race, gender, and experience which comprise any

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**Abigail Childs refers to the sexual conventions of film noir, soap opera, and Mexican comic books in her film *Mayhem*.**

Courtesy filmmaker

particular identity.

Recognizing this, the panel quickly acknowledged the contradictions inherent in the notions of experimental film and gay identity. Hubbard, whose own films are rooted in experimental documentary, vented hostility toward narrative and asserted that the mythology supporting narrative film—the nuclear family, the blissfulness of heterosexuality, the happy ending—deteriorates even while those films continue to be made. Su Friedrich, however, was less willing to dismiss narrative form. She began by challenging the heady word "radical," calling into question the alleged separation between form and content. Citing Stan Brakhage as an example, Friedrich debated the inherent radicality of using experimental filmmaking techniques, noting the tension beween Brakhages's conventional subject matter ("his family, his wife as muse, himself as genius artist") and his innovative, unconventional form. Conversely, she conceded that documentary and narrative films, though laden with a grim history of audience manipulation, had profoundly challenged her personal and social assumptions.

Friedrich's films address this ability to juggle the experimental with conventions of documentary or narrative, and her 1982 *Gently Down the Stream* remains strikingly fresh, one of the festival's most articulate examples of structural filmmaking. Making her words at once physical and silent, she scratches the contents of her dreams directly on the film, often accompanied by repetitive images of women swimming and exercising—each word flickering on screen for 18 frames. Forcing us to read one word at a time, the voice of a narrator is displaced with each viewer's reading of her parables of sexuality and ritual. Friedrich's work was included in a program of structural films that included Warren Sonbert's *The Cup and the Lip* and Roger Jacoby's *Aged in Wood*. Unfortunately, both films suffered in this context. Sonbert's cryptic, elegant and architectural film was flattened when played back to back with two other silent films. Jacoby's almost invisible film—which mainly shows the grain of the film stock and only faint images—pays lip ser-vice to Bette Davis and her longstanding role as a figure of identification for gay men by picturing an audience watching *All About Eve* and mouthing Davis' lines. Jacoby's other films, including *How to Be a Homosexual, Part 1*, although not included in the festival, are hand-processed quirky fables, often starring his lover and Warhol Factory superstar Ondine. A single isolated work by this filmmaker seemed stranded and small in this context.

During the panel discussion, Abigail Child asserted, "We look *at* content, we look *from* form," while pointing out that only in North America and Western Europe do we have the permission to indulge in lengthy debates on the nature of what is experimental. She focussed on lesbian and gay expressions as a permission to speak, an admission of difference within a culture of uniformity. One such admission, Childs' film *Mayhem* (recently censored in Tokyo for its use of Japanese lesbian erotica) recalls the sexual conventions prevalent in film noir. Even the costumes in the film are reduced to the shorthand of genitalia, women in dots, men in stripes. But *Mayhem* insinuates an inverted social order: Men lounge like coquettes in black panties; women alternately strangle them and return their stares. *Mayhem* reminds us that our bodies belong as much to the history of cinema as they do to our lovers, recalling Angela Carter's observation in *The Sadeian Woman*, "But our flesh arrives to us out of history, like everything else does. We may believe we fuck stripped of social artifice: in bed we even feel we touch the bedrock of human nature itself. But we are deceived."

Child's decision to work within the oppressive conventions of cinematic clichés in an effort to disrupt them was reiterated in a number of other films in the festival including Midi Onodera's *Ten Cents a Dance (Parallax)*, Curt McDowell's *Confessions*, and Juliet Bashore's *Kamikaze Hearts*. Cleverly isolating her individuals by using a split screen device, Onodera's three-part series of mating vignettes nevertheless perpetuate stereotypes of lesbians (all talk, no action), gay men (all sex,

no talk), and straights (lots of talk, simulated sex) without significantly questioning these categories. Touted as causing a "near riot" in San Francisco (presumably for the rather tame simulated tea room sex), Onodera's film relies on our knowledge of stereotypes for its humor but stops short of making a social critique or providing alternatives to typecast sexuality.

Similarly, *Kamikaze Hearts* uses the clichés of the porn industry to examine those who live within it. Attempting to "hurt the voyeur" by reducing our protected distance from the actresses and allowing her audience a strong identification with Tigr, who is both a character in the film and an actual person working as a porn producer/actress, Bashore refuses to ignore the complex and historic interconnections between sex work and lesbian culture. But Bashore also editorializes on the porn industry, using devices that emphasize isolation and artifice. We see Tigr and her lover Mitch trapped under ladders, pinned under cameras, as well as Tigr directing Mitch during a sex scene. Presenting a difficult blend of fiction, documentary, and morality play, the film ends with a cynical vision of alienated sexuality—wagging her needle at the camera after they shoot cocaine, Mitch taunts, "This is my dick. I fucked her with my dick, and she loved it."

Several other films in the festival attempted to directly confront questions of social identity, among them Michael Wallin's *Decodings* and *The Place between Our Bodies* and Robert Gates and Lynn Wyatt's *Communication from Weber*. All three share a recognition of the varied ways in which we make ourselves up out of bits of movies and magazines, unconsciously creating slivered and contradictory personae from a world of role models. Although made 13 years apart, both of Wallin's films deal with a persistent yet contradictory vision of the body, at once "free" sexually while controlled socially. *Decodings* presents an even paced collection of archival footage accompanied by a long, unadorned narration and music by Shostakovich. Wallin does more than quote the medical training films and stock dramas he has retrieved from the vaults, however. By conflating images from the world outside with personal, anecdotal experience he shows how deeply branded we are by the world of images and the signs of social coercion—a point made in scenes of open heart surgery, boys boxing blindfolded, mechanical arms with hooks instead of fingers fastening suit buttons, cars leaping through fire, and so on. On the soundtrack, a man's voice speaks about psychological collapse, boyhood homoerotic games of goosing, official sounding medical diagnoses, and oral sex in the desert with a Marine. *Decodings* delineates some of the overlaps of militarism and sexuality, medical examination and child's play, offering a reminder of how we can become alienated from our skin even as we live in it. As spectators we watch the distinction between our own lives and the fictions of film become blurred, indistinct. Wallin's earlier film,


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*The Place between Our Bodies*, begins by contemplating the standard definition of gay male identity circa 1975 as promiscuous, absorbed in the consuming world of pornography. As the film unfolds however, it yields to a celebration of the possibility of a relationship. Hardly polished—and often uncomfortable—the film pictures explicit sex but cannot be reduced to pornography.

During both the screenings of *The Place between Our Bodies* that I attended an AZT beeper happened to go off in the audience, a signal not only to a person with AIDS to take medication but also a sign of just how long ago 1975 seems. *A.I.D.S.C.R.E.A.M.*, by Jerry Tartaglia, and *No Photo Required*, by Larry Brose, expressed rage and a recognition of the feelings of victimization that result from AIDS. Unfortunately, both did this without admitting the possibility of effective activist resistence. A third film about AIDS in the festival—*Catching Fire*, a dramatic narrative film along the lines of a daytime soap—added nothing to the discussion of the issues at least raised by Tartaglia's and Brose's films. In contrast to these films, *The Place between Our Bodies* crudely yet effectively states a case for the importance of picturing gay and lesbian sex, countering the prevailing social climate that counsels abstinence, just saying "no." However, *Communication from Weber* most consistently addressed the question of identity. Gates and Wyatt's film employs a skewed documentary format to unfurl the banner of Albert Michael Weber/Sabina, a self-proclaimed "full-time third sex role transgender person." Weber explains that he initially took up cross-dressing as a masquerade to avoid masturbation, but he came to exploit his confusion of sexual identities as a retaliation against compulsory heterosexual sexism, "to show honestly both deep pain and exploitation of women." At one point, Weber asks his girlfriend to speak to him as both Albert and Sabina, effectively short-circuiting the myth of a coherent persona. At another moment, he shows his slip beneath jeans and flannel workshirt, confiding that his clothes reveal the entire story of his day. In *Communication* the body becomes the ultimate costume, socially framed and controlled, but still allowing its individual, melancholic voice to speak about alternate life.

The "queer kind of film" that Schulman and Hubbard have helped to cultivate admits such histories, such separate, idiosyncratic voices. Although the festival could have benefitted from programming that depended less on stylistic groupings and attempted to link works conceptually, the categorical structure most likely reflects the prevailing ideas about how to attract a sizable audience to such events. Still, the festival's apparent health in its second year and the fact that it will once again travel around the country are hopeful signs for the future. At the same time, a more thorough survey of gay and lesbian voices might include not just filmmakers but lesbian and gay work in video as well. It might also serve the interests of the festival's audience—or perhaps a wider audience—if the programmers didn't take

gay and lesbian sexuality as their sole criteria. We must gain even greater visibility so that others may see what we knew all along. Our speech has been too long withheld. As Sabina/Albert Michael declares in *Communication from Weber*, "I can see entire life. Cannot tell half to anyone."

*Tom Kalin is a film- and videomaker living in New York City, whose latest tape is* They are lost to vision altogether.

## IN BRIEF

This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the **FIVF Festival Bureau.** Listings do not constitute an endorsement & since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. If your experience differs from our account, please let us know so we can improve our reliability.

### DOMESTIC

ANN ARBOR FILM FESTIVAL, Mar. 21-26, MI. 27th annual exhibition for "all films that demonstrate a high regard for film as a creative medium." Oldest 16mm fest in the country, w/ long tradition of showcasing independent & experimental films. Over 100 films shown each yr in programs that incorporate variety of styles: doc, animation, experimental, shorts, small features. No special cats, guidelines, or requirements for entries. Awards incl. Tom Berman Award to most promising filmmaker ($1000) & Marvin Felheim Award ($100); about $4000 in addt'l awards given at judges' discretion. Selected participating films chosen by awards jury go on nat'l tour to colleges & film showcases after fest; rental fee of $1/min. paid. Entry fee: $25. Format: 16mm. Deadline: Mar. 3. Film arrival deadline: Mar. 16. Ann Arbor Film Festival, Box 8232, Ann Arbor, MI 48107; (313) 995-5356.

ASIAN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, June, NY. Producers, directors, writer/producers & writer/directors of Asian heritage eligible to participate in non-competitive 5-day showcase, now in 12th edition & country's oldest fest of films by established & emerging Asian/Asian American filmmakers. Last yr's program marked by record attendance & extensive press coverage. Features & shorts accepted: experimental, doc, narrative, performance pieces, adaptations. Program goes on int'l tour after opening. No entry fee. Format: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette or rough cut. Deadline: Mar. 31. Contact: Marlina Gonzalez, Asian Ciné-Vision, 32 E. Broadway, New York, NY 10002; (212) 925-8685.

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, May, CA. Accepts films dealing w/ (but not limited to) Asian Pacific & Asian Pacific American culture, history & experiences. Cosponsored by Visual Communications & UCLA Film & TV Archive. Feature, dramatic/narrative, doc, experimental & animated works incl. 4th annual program incl. regional showcase of recent work of Asian Pacific filmmakers in Southern CA as well as int'l selection of films from countries of Pacific Rim. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8; preview on cassette. Deadline: Jan. 31. Contact: Abraham Ferrer, Asian Pacific American International Film Festival, Visual Communications, 263 S. Los Angeles St., Suite 307, Los Angeles, CA 90012; (213) 680-4462.

ATHENS INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Apr. 28-May 6, OH. Now in 16th yr, fest committed to presentation of work of int'l ind. film artists. This yr Athens Video Festival merges w/ film fest. Prizes total $6000. Cats: experimental, doc, traditional narrative, experimental narrative, animation. All work must be completed btwn Mar. 1987 & Mar. 1989. Entry fee: $20-30, depending on length. Format: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Feb. 10 (video), Mar. 17 (film). Contact: Craig Stevens/Ruth Bradley, Athens International Film & Video Festival, Box 388, Athens, OH 45701; (614) 593-1330.

ATLANTA FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, May 10-14, GA. Juried competitive fest for new, ind. animated, narrative, doc, experimental & student works of all lengths, now in 13th yr. $5000 in cash & equip. prizes. Judges this yr: Neil Seiling of Intermedia Arts & video artist Lisa Steele (video); Scott MacDonald of Utica College & ind. documentarian Jan Krawitz (film). Work must be produced in last 2 yrs. Entry fee: $25. Format: 16mm, super 8. Deadline: Feb. 10. Contact: Shellie Fleming, Atlanta Film & Video Festival, IMAGE Film/Video Center, 75 Bennett St., NW, Suite M-1, Atlanta, GA 30309; (404) 352-4225.

BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Apr. 3-21, AL. 17th annual edition of competitive fest for "creative films for lifetime learning." 14 cats incl. Americana, arts, business/industry, early childhood, energy/environment, health/physical ed, human relations, independent/student, language arts, math/science, religion/philosophy, special challenges, social sciences, teacher/career education. Awards: Best of Fest (Electra statuette & $1000); Silver Electra & $500 to best film & best video; Best of Category for best film & video in each cat. Finalists receive certificate of recognition. Work must be completed btwn Jan. 1, 1987 & Jan. 1, 1989 & be under 60 min. Synopsis must accompany each entry. Entry fees: commercial/non-commercial $25-40 before Jan. 20, $30-50 after; student $15 before Jan. 20, $20 after. Format: 16mm, 1/2". Deadline: Jan. 31. Contact: BIEFF, c/o Alabama Power, Box 2641, Birmingham, AL 35291-0665; (205) 250-2550 or BIEFF, c/o Jean Wilson, 508 Central Ave., Bessemer, AL 35020; (205) 426-0656.

DANIEL WADSWORTH MEMORIAL VIDEO FESTIVAL, February, CT. Open competition for ind. experimental/art video, subjective/hybrid docs & cross-genre works. Opening reception Feb.17; exhibition continues through Mar. 17. Work must be completed after Jan. 1, 1987 & under 30 min. No formal cats; competition awards 6 prizes: $500 grand prize, $400 2nd prize, 4 $200 fest prizes (prizes incl. purchase price of tapes to be added to collection of Real Art Ways). 135 works entered last yr. No entry fee, but entrants pay return postage. Format: 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Jan. 31. Contact: Real Art Ways, 94 Allyn St., Hartford, CT 06103; (203) 525-5521.

HERLAND FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, April, NY. Sensitivity to women's issues & creativity inform selections for 3rd edition of fest for works for & about women. All genres accepted. Entry fee: $5. Format: 3/4", 1/2", Beta, 16mm, 8mm. Deadline: April 4. Contact: Oswego Art Guild, Box 315, Ft. Ontario Pk., Oswego, NY 13126; (315) 342-3579.


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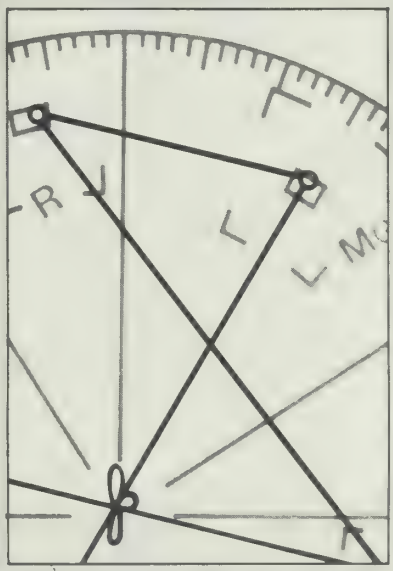
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HOUSTON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Apr. 21-30, TX. 11th annual edition; receives largest number of entries of int'l fests (2500 last yr). Last yr also saw premiere of 75 features from 21 countries. Over 200 shorts, docs, TV & experimental films shown. Cats: theatrical features (animated, doc, 1st feature, foreign, ind., low-budget, major studio); TV (sub-cats incl. analysis of single current news story, continuing news story, made-for-tv feature, indiv. on-camera talent, ind. video, information, cultural or historical programming, in-house, local public service, directing, writing, TV special); doc films & videos; shorts; TV commercials; experimental films & videos (animation, comedy, computer graphics, dramatic, art, live action, mixed media); super 8; music videos; new media. Awards: Gold Grand Award for best entry in each major cat, Gold Special Jury Award, Gold, Silver & Bronze Awards. Film & video judged equally in competition. Workshops & seminars also held. Entry fee: $25-150. Format: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Mar. 1. Contact: J. Hunter Todd, director, Houston International Film Festival, Box 56566, Houston, TX 77256; (713) 965-9955; telex 317876 TODDCORP HOU; fax: (713) 965-9960.

MONITOR AWARDS. September, CA. Sponsored by nonprofit trade assoc. Int'l Teleproduction Society, dedicated to support audio & video production & postprod. Awards presented to below-the-line professionals in 18 cats, incl. entertainment programming (film originated), computer animation, music video, news/doc, corporate, children's, promos, show reels. W/in each cat, awards go to producers, directors, editors, designers of special FX, computer animation & video paint, plus sound mixers, camerapeople & lighting directors. Entries must be produced or postproduced during 1988. Individual & corporate entries accepted. Entry fees: $90-140. Format: 3/4". Deadline: Feb. 15. Contact: Monica Mathis, Int'l Monitor Awards, 990 6th Ave., #21E, New York, NY 10018; (212) 629-3266; fax: (212) 629-3265.

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON FAMILY RELATIONS MEDIA AWARDS COMPETITION. May, MN. Recognizes films, videos & filmstrips on marriage & family topics. 21st yr. 11 competition cats: human development, parenting, non-traditional family systems, marital/family issues & comunication, sexuality & sex role development, alcohol & drug abuse, human repro. & family planning,

stress/transition & crisis management, contemp. social issues, families w/ special needs, abuse & neglect. Submissions must be completed after Jan. 1, 1987. Best of Category awards given for each format. Entry fees: $60-190, depending upon length. Deadlines: filmstrips & 1/2": Mar. 17; 16mm: Apr. 10. Contact: National Council on Family Relations, 1910 W. County Rd. B, Suite 147, St. Paul, MN 55113; (612) 633-6933. Send entries to: Marilyn Coleman, Dept. of Child & Family Development, 28 Stanley Hall, Univ. of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211; (314) 882-4360/4035.

NEWARK BLACK FILM FESTIVAL, June/July, NJ. New independent films and videos created by black filmmakers or reflecting black culture invited to participate in 15th anniv. edition of fest. Runs 6 wks in June & July before large, diverse audiences. Fest also presents Paul Robeson Awards to films embodying excellence in noncommercial ind. filmmaking. All styles & genres sought. Cash awards totalling at least $4000 distributed among 4 films. Enter competition separately. Format: 16mm, 1", 3/4", 1/2"; preview on cassette preferred. Deadline: Feb. 15 for fest, Apr. 5 for competition. Contact: Newark Black Film Festival, Newark Museum, 49 Washington St., Box 540, Newark, NJ 07101; (201) 596-6550 (call before submitting work).

PALO ALTO FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, May, CA. Regional competitive showcase restricted to N. CA ind. filmmakers. In 14th yr (after hiatus last yr), fest offers $3000 in prizes, w/ $1000 going to best in fest. Entries should be under 60 min. Format: 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 1/2". Deadline: Mar. 11. Contact: Susan Tavernetti, director, Palo Alto Film & Video Festival, 1313 Newell Rd., Palo Alto, CA 94303; (415) 329-2122.

RETIREMENT RESEARCH FOUNDATION NATIONAL MEDIA OWL AWARDS, May, IL. Dedicated to works that address issues related to "aging, capturing authentic images of older persons & illuminating the challenge & promise of an aging society," competition takes entries in 4 cats: independent film & video; TV & theatrical film fiction; TV nonfiction; training films & tapes. Prizes totalling over $30,000 range from $500-5,000; Owl statuettes also awarded. Entries must have been produced in US & released or initally broadcast/cablecast btwn Jan. 1 & Dec. 31, 1988. Sponsored by Retirement Research Foundation, established by John MacArthur. Deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: Joyce Bolinger, project director, Center for New Television, 912 S. Wabash, Chicago, IL 60605; (312) 427-5446.

USA FILM FESTIVAL, Apr. 13-19, TX. 19th annual invitational fest, originally established to celebrate US filmmakers. Includes 11th annual nat'l short film & video competition, dedicated this yr to Charles Samu. Awards of $1000 given to best narrative, nonfiction & animation/experimental works; winners invited to Dallas for awards ceremony. Other smaller cash jury prizes awarded at jury's discretion. Length: under 40 min. Work must be completed in previous yr. Entry fee: $35 (shorts). Format: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Larger fest features Dallas premieres of new major films w/ special film tributes & other events. Deadline: Mar. 1 for shorts, Mar. 7 for other fest entries. Contact: Richard Peterson, USA Film Festival, 2909-B Canton St., Dallas, TX 75226; (214) 744-5400.

VIDEO SHORTS FESTIVAL, Feb. 11-12, WA. 8th annual int'l competition for short noncommercial video artworks up to 6 min. 10 winners receive $100 honorarium & incl. in fest archive. Formats: 3/4", 1/2" (NTSC). Entry fee: $10/tape ($5 each addt'l. entry on tape). Deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: Video Shorts Festival, 1331 Third Ave., Suite 518, Seattle, WA 98101; (206) 628-0838.

## FOREIGN

BERGAMO INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF AUTHOR FILMS, Mar. 9-14, Italy. Exhibition for 1st releases (outside country of origin) & unshown at other int'l fests. Competitive & info sections accept doc & narrative features. Last yr 20 films in competition. Producer & director split $3600 in grand prize money; other special jury prizes go to best score, actor, actress, scenario & best 1st work. Format: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Jan. 30. Contact: Nino Zuchelli, director, Mostra Internazionale del Film D'Autore, Rotonda dei Mille, 1, Bergamo, Italy; tel: 243566; telex: 300408.

CANNES INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, May 11-25, France. 42nd yr of world's most celebrated film fest, attended by tens of thousands, incl. stars, directors, distribs, buyers & journalists. Fest offers ideal situations for making transactions at abundant parties, press events, meetings, seminars & screenings. Critical exposure at Cannes can be important to film's commercial success. Participation can be expensive: advertising, press materials, publicists, foreign reps, possible 35mm blowup & subtitling may cost thousands. Fest sections: Official Selection (incl. Official Competition) for features & shorts; Special Out-of-Competition, for features ineligible for competition because of previous awards, invited by jury; Un Certain Regard, for features, docs, compilation films & films by new directors, out-of-competition (18 films); Quinzaine des Realisateurs (Director's Fortnight), the main sidebar for auteur films w/ purpose of discovering new talent/ innovations, sponsored by Assoc. of French Film Directors (18 features); le Semaine de Critique (International Critics' Week), noncompetitive selection of 1st or 2nd features & docs chosen by members of French Film Critics Union (7 films). Market, administered separately, screens films in main venue (formerly Palais des Festivals, torn down last yr) & local theaters (500 films participated last yr). Entries for official selection & Director's Fortnight must be completed in previous 12 mos., European premieres & not shown in other major int'l fests. Int'l Critics Week selections must be completed w/in 2 yrs prior to fest. Top prizes incl. Official Competition's Palme d'Or (feature & short) & Camera d'Or (1st feature director) in any section. For info & accreditation, contact: Catherine Verret, French Film Office, 745 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10151; (212) 832-8860. Pierre-Henri Deleau, director of Quinzaines des Realisateurs, is usually in NYC in early Mar. to seek entries. Interested filmmakers should send short synopsis & credit list to French Film Office & request an appl.; screening time at filmmaker's expense. Official Section: Festival International du Film (deadline Mar. 1), 71, rue du Faubourg St. Honore, 75008 Paris, France, tel: 1 42669220, telex: 650765. Quinzaine des Realisateurs (deadline Apr. 7), Societe des Realisateurs de Films, 215 Faubourg St. Honore, 75008 Paris, France, tel: 1 45610166, telex: 220064 ref. 1311. Semaine International de la Critique (deadline Mar. 1), Robert Chazal, president, 73, rue d'Anjou, 75008 Paris, France, tel: 1 3873616, telex: 650407/408. Cannes Film Market, 14 rue de Marigan, 75008 Paris, France, tel: (011) 331 225-7063, telex: 270105f TXFRA/389.

CRACOW INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF SHORT FILMS, May, Poland. Accepts shorts under 30 min. In 26th yr, competitive fest recognized by FIAPF & awards Grand Prize (Golden Dragon), 2 Special Prizes (Golden Drag-


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ons). 4 major prizes (Silver Dragons) & special prizes for photography, screenplay & music. Competitive cats: doc., popular science, animated, experimental, featurettes. Entries should be undecorated at other int'l European fests & be produced in preceding yr. Particularly interested in films that "reveal changes, trends & achievements of 20th century." Format: 35mm, 16mm; preselection on cassette. Deadline: Mar. 5. Contact: Management Office, Cracow International Festival of Short Films, Pl. Zwycięstwa 9, Box 127, 00-950, Warsaw, Poland; tel: 26-40-51; telex 813640 film pl.

GOLDEN ROSE OF MONTREUX TELEVISION FESTIVAL, May 7-13, Switzerland. 29th yr of fest for light entertainment TV, open to music, comedy & variety programs produced &/or broadcast after Mar.19 88. 2 concurrent competitions for network entries & ind. producers/distribs. Int'l press jury awards press prize. Awards incl. Golden Rose of Montreux (w/ 10,000 Swiss francs), Silver Rose & Bronze Rose. Last yr fest attended by 900 delegates from 35 countries. Deadline: Mar. 1 (independent prod.); Mar. 31 (network). Contact: John E. Nathan, N. American rep., 509 Madison Ave., Suite 1810, New York, NY 10022; (212) 223-0044.

HIROSHIMA INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, July, Japan. Established in 1975 to commemorate anniversary of atomic bombing of Hiroshima, competitive fest operates on theme of "pursuit of peace & a reverence for life." Accepted are group or individual amateur works of all styles embodying fest theme. Entries should be under 30 min. & produced after 1983. Prizes in each cat: Grand Prize (statuette, citation, travel coupon ¥500,000); President of Chugoku Broadcasting Co. Prize (statuette, citation, travel coupon ¥250,000); 11 outstanding prizes & 10 honorable mention prizes (statuettes & plaques). Formats: 16mm, 8mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta, 8mm video. Deadline: Jan. 31. Contact: Hiroshima Int'l Amateur Film & Video Festival Working Committee, c/o Chugoku Broadcasting Co., 21-3 Motomachi, Naka-ku, Hiroshima, 730 Japan; tel: 082-223-1111.

LONDON INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, March, England. 2 competition classes, open & amateur. "Amateur" films defined as "films/videos made for love w/ no financial reward & w/out professional assistance." Open class for productions by "independent & semi-professional filmmakers & film school students." Certificates awarded in both cats. Presented by Institute of Amateur Cinematographers, member of Int'l. Assoc. of Amateur Film & Video Festivals. Attended by audiences of 400; winning films participate in 5 regional premieres. Last yr 175 entries from 17 countries received, w/ majority on super 8. Film/videomaker pays roundtrip postage. Formats: 16mm, super 8, 8mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Entry fee: £5 (£2 junior under 17), w/ £5 addt'l for return postage & £1 handling charge for non-IAC members. Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: Bernard Ashby, IAC, Box 618, Ealing, London W5 1SX, England; tel: 03722 76358.

MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, June, Australia. 38th edition of one of Australia's 2 leading fests. Presents wide cross-section of contemporary int'l cinema, incl. features, docs, video, super 8, children's films. Fest attracts large number of Australian & New Zealand buyers for theatrical, video, TV & nontheatrical rights. Feature section is noncompetitive. Int'l short film competition one of world's longest running; entry open to short fiction films less than 30 min. & docs less than 60 min., 35mm & 16mm. Entry fee: $10. Entries in competition should not be awarded in other competitive fests. Awards: Grand Prix (City of Melbourne Award for Best Film: $4000), Herald & Weekly Times Award for Best Documentary Film ($1500), Schwartz Publishing Award for Best Experimental Film ($1500), Special Awards for best fiction & animated films ($1500 each) & Cinevex Award for Best Student Film. Fest director's plan is to shift emphasis to more off-beat, unconventional work. Deadline: Mar. 30. Contact: Tait Brady, director, 41-45 A'Beckett St., Melbourne Victoria, 3000 Australia; tel: (03) 663-1395; telex: 152613 FIFEST.

SANTAREM INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL OF AGRICULTURAL & ENVIRONMENT FILM, May, Portugal. 15th yr of film fest & 3rd yr for video. Sections: feature films on theme "Man & Earth"; shorts (under 45 min.) on agriculture & environment; video on any theme (out of competition) & environment & agriculture (in competition). Gold, silver & bronze Bunch awards given, as well as prizes for best director, script, actor, actress. Format: 35mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Feb. 24. Contact: Santarem International Film & Video Festival of Agricultural & Environment Film, Rua Conselheiro Leal, 1, 2000 Santarem, Portugal; tel: (043) 22130; telex: 65164 RETURI P.

VARNA INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF RED CROSS & HEALTH FILMS, May 27-June 4, Bulgaria. In 13th edition of competitive, biennial event. Recognizes films on topical Red Cross, health, ecological & humanitarian subjects produced after Jan. 1, 1987. FIAPF-recognized. Cats: short & medium length Red Cross & health films under 60 min. (docs, animation, scientific, instructional, etc.); feature films; TV films & programs under 60 min. Prizes: (short & medium length) Golden Ship Grand Prix of Bulgarian Red Cross President to best film, Grand Prix for best health film, Special Prize for best scientific or instructional film, 1st & 2nd prizes (gold & silver medals) in each subgroup; (feature) Grand Prix & prizes for best direction, actress & actor & Special Prize of League of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies for best film w/ humanitarian character; (TV films & programs) Grand Prix & 1st, 2nd & Special Prize for best film on health ed. in each subgroup. All films in competition receive participation diploma. Separate film market w/ no participation fee & 1st 60 min. screened free. Market deadline: Apr. 5. Format: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Feature cat accepts 35mm only; TV cat also accepts 1" & 2". Deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: Alexander Marinov, director, International Festival of Red Cross & Health Films, 1, Blvd. Biruzov, Sofia, Bulgaria; tel: 44-14-43; telex: 23248 B CH K BG.

YAMAGATA INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 10-15, Japan. Debut of Asia's first doc film fest. Will be biennial & competitive. Yamagata City is 360 km NE of Tokyo & celebrating 100th anniv. Fest commemorates centennial & intended to "contribute to better understanding between peoples & cultures by presenting new achievements in int'l doc films & encouraging young filmmakers around the world." Entries must be Japanese premieres, produced after Oct. 1, 1987 & over 60 min. Selected films must have Japanese subtitles; fest covers cost of new prints, Japanese versions & transportation. Prizes: Grand Prize (Robert Flaherty Prize) ¥3,000,000, Mayor's Prize ¥1,000,000, 3 runner-up prizes & 1 special prize, ¥300,000 each. No entry fee. Format: 35mm, 16mm; preselection on cassette. Deadline: Mar. 31. Contact: Mikiko Tomita, coordinator/Tokyo office, Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival, 1-7-2-201, Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160, Japan; tel: (03) 356-7401; telex: 02322383 JNCIDF J; fax: (03) 356-7633.

88

The AIVF Indie Awards

# THE ENVELOPE PLEASE... THE 1988 INDIE AWARDS



The 1988 Indie Awards were hosted by the American Museum of the Moving Image, located in Queens, New York, and devoted to the history of motion pictures and television, which opened its doors in spring 1988. Welcoming AIVF's supporters was Rochelle Slovin, AMMI's executive director.

The Association of Independent Video and Film's Indie Awards ceremony took place on October 13, 1988, at the new American Museum of the Moving Image. A biennial event, this year's benefit program attracted over 200 supporters—a near capacity audience. The Indie Awards provide an occasion for AIVF to pay tribute to those individuals and organizations whose achievements inspire and assist independent producers. Awardees are nominated by AIVF members and voted on by the board of directors. This year's categories included: Media Arts Center, Innovator, Curator (this went to Edith Kramer of Pacific Film Archives, who was not able to attend the ceremony), Lifetime Achievement, Distributor, and Advocate, plus special awards from the AIVF Board of Directors and from Eastman Kodak. All photos by William Irwin.



Performance artist Michael Smith acted as the evening's emcee. Here he provides some comic relief boogying to a video of Donny and Marie Osmond—two artists, he says, who were major influences on his work.



Toni Treadway contemplates the Eastman Kodak Award for Excellence, which she and Bob Brodsky were awarded for their work with the smaller film formats and the range of filmmakers who work with super 8 and regular 8mm.



Film director Spike Lee, who presented the award for Curator, shares a joke with AIVF executive director Larry Sapadin and Micki Segel.



Documentary producer Robert Richter, recently re-elected president of the AIVF board of directors, chats with fellow documentarian and board vice president Loni Ding.



The Life Achievement Award went to William Miles. Best known for his four-hour documentary series on Harlem's 350-year history, *I Remember Harlem*, Miles has produced numerous award-winning historical documentaries.



The Experimental Television Center in Owego, New York, netted the Indie Award for Innovation, which was accepted by its director, Ralph Hocking. ETC has designed numerous image processing tools to meet the special needs of video artists, and developed an artists' residency program to make them widely available.



Jaynne Keyes, Commissioner of the New York State Governor's Office for Motion Picture and Television Development, smiles with film and stage actor Tony LoBianco. As an awards presenter, LoBianco made an impromptu and eloquent statement about the social and political value of independent production after watching some of the evening's clips.



Susan Seidelman, who presented the Media Arts Center Award, and friend browse through the Indie Awards program in AMMI's 200-seat auditorium, one of the museum's two screening facilities.



Fran Spielman, who helped form the First Run Features collective enterprise back in 1980, accepts the award for Distributor for her many years of work dedicated to the distribution of independent film.




The award for Advocate went to George Stoney, a veteran producer who has spent much his life teaching community members and students how to use film and video as tools to communicate and organize.



During the awards reception, Jaynne Keyes poses with (left to right): Ira Goodman, president, Precision Film & Video; Edward J. Burns, regional sales manager of Motion Picture and Audiovisual Markets, who presented Eastman Kodak's special Award for Excellence; James Hannafin, vice president and general manager of Technicolor; Dan Sandberg, president of TVC Laboratories; and Bernard Barnett, executive vice president of Precision.



Video artist and AIVF board member Skip Blumberg toasts Dee Davis, a long-time veteran of Appalshop, which won the Media Arts Center Award. For the past 19 years, Appalshop has produced films and videotapes that are by and about the people, music, and culture of Appalachia.



The AIVF Board of Directors Award is reserved for someone who combines leadership and support for the independent community with integrity and achievement in the mainstream industry. This year the award went to Joan Micklin Silver, whose most recent feature is *Crossing Delancey*.

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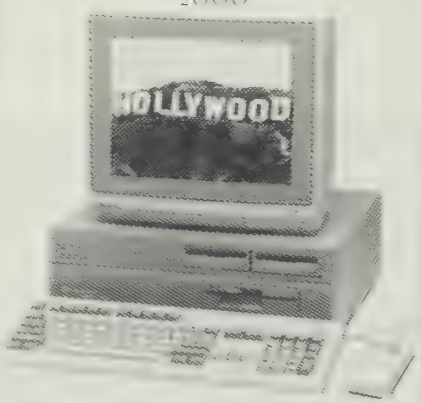
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Deadlines for **Classifieds** will be respected. These are the 8th of each month, **two months** prior to the cover date, e.g., January 8 for the March issue. Make check or money order—no cash, please—payable to FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.

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BROADCAST QUALITY VIDEO EDITING: 3/4" Sony BVU-800s BVE 3000 Editor TBCs, switcher, slo-mo, freeze frames, chyron graphics. W/ editor. 900' sq. studio w/ lighting/sound/camera. $50/hr commercial, $35/hr indies. Downtown Brooklyn, A&S (718) 802-7750.

VIDEO 8 EDITING: color correction, slo-mo, still. PCM digital sound mix/dub/rec. Transfer. Duplication. Production, too. Sony Pro. Reasonable. East Village. Info: Franck Goldberg (212) 677-1679.

NEGATIVE MATCHING: Quality and exp. neg cutter for 16 & 35mm. For Sale: 35 & 16mm film splicers (excell. use for neg matchers); (3) 28 x 60 editing tables. Prod. office avail for rent, long/short-term, midtown. Lou Somerstein (212) 581-3728, after 6, 532-1924.

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# NOTICES

**Notices** are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. **The Independent** reserves the right to edit for length.

Deadlines for **Notices** will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date, e.g., January 8 for the March issue. Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

## Conferences • Workshops

BOSTON FILM/VIDEO FOUNDATION workshops beginning Jan.: Basic Video, Jan. 3-7, $215; Time Code Editing, Jan. 7 & 8, $160; Prod. Techniques for Corporate Video, Jan. 14, $45; Producing & Directing for TV, Jan. 7-28, $160. All workshops held at BF/VF; members discount: 10%. Contact: BF/VF, 1126 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540.

INTENSIVE DOCUMENTARY SEMINAR will be offered by Film Arts Foundation in association w/ Sundance Institute's U.S. Film Festival in Park City, Utah, Jan. 19-29. Participants will screen all doc films in competition at festival & have daily intensive seminars w/ many participating filmmakers. Seminars, conducted by Ben Shedd & Mitch Block, will focus on fundraising, prod., marketing & distribution. Two academic units avail. from Boston's Emerson College. Seminar fee: $500, w/ additional fee if course credit taken. FAF members receive $25 discount. Contact: FAF Documentary Seminar, Anja Hanson, c/o DCL Box 69799, Los Angeles, CA 90069; (213) 652-8000.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIMENTAL FILM CONGRESS: call for papers for Critic's Sidebar, no longer than 20 min. Congress, to be held in Toronto, will be week-long event of screenings, lectures, workshops & panels devoted to avant-garde cinema. Send short synopsis by Jan. 1 to Jim Shedden, Coordinator, Int'l Experimental Film Congress, 2 Sussex Ave., Toronto, ON M5S 1J5, Canada; (416) 978-7790/588-8940.

MEDIA TRAINING AT FILM/VIDEO ARTS: Prof. instruction in all areas of film & video prod. on beginning & intermediate levels, incl. 16mm film prod., 16mm film editing, video prod., video editing, screenwriting, directing, fundraising, prod. mgmt & intro to digital effects. Scholarships avail. for Blacks, Latinos, Asians & Native Amers residing in NYS. Contact: Media Training, F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9361.

DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY TV CENTER: free video workshops offered on 3 consecutive Thurs. eves.; editing workshops offered on 4 consecutive Mon. eves. Fee: $60. Contact: DCTV, 87 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 966-4510.

## Films • Tapes Wanted

N.A.M.E. GALLERY is seeking proposals for video installations using only consumer-grade technology, to be exhibited in gallery space. Send all materials w/ SASE. Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: N.A.M.E. Gallery, Attn. Video Comm., 700 N. Carpenter St., Chicago, IL 60622; (312) 276-6677.

FILM CRASH: Submit your new films for regular screenings in Manhattan. Contact Matthew Harrison, (212) 285-4476; Karl Nussbaum, (718) 636-5496; or Scott Saunders, (718) 643-6085.

SUBMIT SHORT FUNNY TAPES for *Cinemax Variety Special*. Up to 4 min. long. Send 1/2" or 3/4" cassette with SASE to: Mike's Talent Show, 12 Spring St., New York, NY 10012.

THE LESBIAN AND GAY VIDEO SERIES at Downtown Community TV Ctr is seeking videos for exhibition in March. Submissions deadline: Feb. 1. Send tapes to: Maria Beatty, DCTV, 87 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 966-4510.

UMBRELLA FILMS: Distributor of films & tapes on environment & public policy seeks new titles. Contact: Umbrella Films, 60 Blake Rd., Brookline, MA 02146; (617) 277-6639.

EDUCATIONAL DISTRIBUTOR seeks independent videos & films for educ. market, incl. health & youth issues. Contact Heather Nancarrow, Select Media, 74 Varick St., Ste. 305, New York, NY 10013; (212) 431-8923.

WANTED: MISSING PROGRAMS: Museum of Broadcasting contains one of the world's largest collections of TV shows, but seeks many missing early greats, e.g., Jackie Gleason's *Calvacade of Stars*, the premiere of *The Tonight Show*, TV coverage of the 1948 election, news from 1946-55, etc. If you know the whereabouts of any of the above shows or would like a complete list of missing shows, contact: Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St., New York, NY 10022; (212) 752-4690.

RED BASS is soliciting 3/4" or 1/2" tapes, 3-10 min. in length, of new, experimental & alternative video for an *Alternate TV* VHS cassette issue w/ catalog. Artists living in southeastern US are encouraged to submit work, esp. tapes critiquing mass media, everyday life & other socio-political issues. Project cosponsored by Contemporary Arts Ctr. of New Orleans & will result in exhibit when CAC reopens. Deadline: Jan. 15. Send submissions w/ SASE to: Red Bass, 2425 Burgundy St., New Orleans, LA 70117; (504) 949-5256.

## Opportunities • Gigs

PROGRAMMER: At Collective for Living Cinema, to begin Mar. 1. Collective screens films & videos 7 days/wk, 52 wks/yr. Applicant must have 2-5 yrs. experience in film/video programming. EOE. Deadline: Jan. 22. Apply in writing (no phone calls) by sending cover letter, resumé, 1 month's program & 3 letters of reference to: Search Committee, Collective for Living Cinema, 41 White St., New York, NY 10013.

CHANNEL L WORKING GROUP seeks student interns & volunteers to assist in prod. of cable TV programming for spring season, Jan.-May. Intensive training provided to all intern/volunteers in location camerawork, lighting, audio & portable video recorders. Positions for weekly, live call-in municipal talk shows, incl. producers, directors & asst. directors to be filled. Prod. experience also offered on special projects, e.g. docs, public service announcements & training tapes. No previous prod. experience required. Must be avail. at least 15 hrs/wk, primarily during days. Contact: Intern Supervisor, Channel L Working Group, 51 Chambers St., Rm. 532, New York, NY 10007; (212) 964-2960.

COLUMBIA COLLEGE Dept. of Film & Video, Chicago, seeks film & video professionals who know how to construct a story & who may have spent part of their careers writing screenplays. Looking for ability to teach prod., incl. Bolex, lighting, editing, etc. & sensitivity to conceptual aspects of filmmaking. Full & part-time positions. Send resumés to: Anthony Loeb, Chair, Dept. of Film & Video, Columbia College, 600 S. Michigan, Chicago, IL 60605.

ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY in Rochester, NY seeks video/film professional for tenure trk, asst. prof. position in B.S. program in film/video. Primary responsibility: teach independent video prod. w/ emphasis on doc. style. Requirements: Masters preferred, teaching plus professional independent doc. experience & competency in time-code editing. Women & minorities encouraged. Appl. deadline: Jan. 9. Mail resumé to: Charles Werberig, Search Committee, SPAS, Box 9887, Rochester Institute of Technology, 1 Lomb Memorial Dr., Rochester, NY 14623.

SUNY/PURCHASE seeks prof. or assoc. prof. of film directing, tenure trk position. Professional feature directing experience required, teaching exp. preferred. Responsible for teaching intermediate directing courses & supervising senior thesis projects, as well as provide leadership to fiction film program w/in film dept. Salary competitive. Submit resumé & cover letter to: Peter Brown, Affirmative Action Officer, SUNY/Purchase, 735 Anderson Hill Rd., Purchase, NY 10577-1400.

CAL STATE SACRAMENTO: Dept. of Communications Studies seeks candidates for media prod. positions to teach audio prod., audio & visual communications, media theory & application. Recent prof. experience highly desirable; demonstrated ability to produce high quality prof. programs necessary. Tenure track position at asst. or assoc. prof. level; salary $27,588-36,488. Ph.D. or M.F.A. preferred. Appl. deadline: Jan. 4. Contact: Gene Knepprath, Dept. of Communication Studies, California State Univ., Sacramento, 6000 J St., Sacramento, CA 95819.

## Publications • Software

INTERMEDIA ARTS: New educ., art & advocacy video catalog avail. Incls docs on art, social issues, Native Amer. topics & contemporary art videos. Contact: Intermedia Arts, 425 Ontario St., SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 627-4444.

NEW NONTHEATRICAL FILM & VIDEO catalog of work by independent producers avail. from Nat'l Educ. Film & Video Festival. Resource on newly-released, nontheatrical films/videos in over 75 subject areas. Price, summaries & distributor index for over 900 prods. $10. Contact: Nat'l Educational Film & Video Festival, 314 E. 10th St., Oakland, CA 94606; (415) 465-6885.

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART program notes for current exhibitions in the 1988-89 New American Film & Video Series avail. free from the Film & Video Dept. Contact: Whitney Museum, 945 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10021.

INDEPENDENT AMERICA: *New Film 1978-88* catalog of essays and program notes from retrospective organized by David Schwartz at American Museum of the Moving Image. Incls essays by Schwartz, Jonathan Rosenbaum, Steve Anker & Berenice Reynaud. $5. Contact AMMI, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria, NY 11106; (718) 784-0077.

MOVING PICTURES BULLETIN: Quarterly published by Television Trust for the Environment to promote info on environmental & development issues through TV & radio, w/ special emphasis on developing countries. Current issue on atmospheric change & implications incls reviews of films & tapes on these issues, booklist, news of forthcoming conferences & features. Contact: Panos Institute, 1409 King St., Alexandria, VA 22314; (713) 836-1302.

FOUNDATION CENTER'S new publications incl. 6th edition of *Foundation Grants to Individuals*, $24 & 17th edition of *The Foundation Grants Index*, $55. Add $2 shipping & handling. Contact: Foundation Center, 79 Fifth Ave., Dept. LX, New York, NY 10003; (800) 424-9836.

## Resources • Funds

OAKLAND MUSEUM announces artist-in-residence program to bring artists into the museum to create innovative works. Selected video artist will receive $6,000 honorarium & will be expected to complete a project or projects during 6-mo. period, incl. the creation of 30-min. video on museum. Contact: Barbara Levine, Art Dept.; (415) 273-3005.

FILM/VIDEO ARTS seeks appls from NYS media artists for 6-day residencies in Video Synthesis Studio from March-June. Should have previous experience w/ image-processing. Submit 1-pg project proposal, resumé, sample of previously completed project & sample from proposed project w/ preferred dates for residency & alternatives, summarize prior exp. w/ image-processing & description of plans to use image-processing in the piece. Deadline: Jan. 30. Contact: Image Processing Residencies, F/VA, 817 Broadway, 2/F, New York, NY 10003-4797.

HARVESTWORKS: 1989 Artist-in-Residence Program offers studio time to complete new work for public presentation or to learn & experiment w/ MIDI computer music system. Emerging artists & artists in audio, film, dance, video, radio, music, theater & performance art encouraged to apply. Deadline: Jan. 6. Contact: Debbie McBride, Harvestworks, AIR Program, 596 Broadway, #602, New York, NY 10012; (212) 431-1130.

SOUTHEAST MEDIA FELLOWSHIPS awarded to independent film & videomakers living in AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TN & VA for prod. grants for new works or works-in-progress for equip. access grants. Deadline: Feb. 1. Panel will meet in March. Contact: SEMFP, c/o Appalshop, Box 743, Whitesburg, KY 41858; (606) 633-0108.

PIFVA SUBSIDY PROGRAM: Facilitates completion of independent, noncommercial films, video & audio prods by Philadelphia Independent Film & Video Assn members. Funded by Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. Grants average $500-1,000. Next deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: PIFVA, Int'l House, 3701 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104; (215) 895-6542.

MASSACHUSETTS COUNCIL ON ARTS & HUMANITIES Contemporary Arts funding program deadline, Feb. 6:


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Art Exchange, provides funds for non-MA resident artists to present completed works in MA & MA artists to present completed works outside MA; New Works, funds for creation of new works for MA premiere. Open to artists in all disciplines. Proposals must be sponsored by MA cultural institutions. Contact: Contemporary Arts staff: (617) 727-3668.

South Carolina Arts Commission Artist Projects deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: SCAC, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201.

Real Art Ways Media Access Studio: multi-track recording studio & 3/4" video shooting & editing facility for creation, completion or documentation of work. Call for rates to independents. Also, Fusion/Fission Regrants: Funds avail. for innovative interdisciplinary work by New England artists: Deadline: Jan. 1989. Contact: Real Art Ways, 94 Allyn St., Hartford, CT 06103-1402; (203) 525-5521.

Apparatus Productions seeks unique, 16mm film projects requiring funds for prod. or postprod. We provide support & limited funding on short, experimental narrative projects. Deadline: Apr. 1. For appl., send SASE to Apparatus Prods, 225 Lafayette St., Rm. 507, New York, NY 10012.

American Women in Radio & TV 14th Annual AWRT Nat'l Commendation Awards to be presented to programs, ads, news & features that contribute to the following criteria: advancement of women by enhancing their image, position &/or welfare, portray women in a positive & realistic manner, present a new or different perspective on the human condition w/ particular reference to women, address an area of interest & concern to women, or have an impact on issues related to women. Send radio entries on audiocassette & TV entries on 3/4" videocassette w/ $75 entry fee & $50 fee for students. Must have been aired Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 1988. Deadline: Jan. 31 postmark. Contact Amer. Women in Radio & TV, Nat'l Commendation Awards, 1101 Connecticut Ave., NW, Ste. 700, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 429-5102.

Frontline: Hr-long weekly public affairs series broadcast nationally on PBS will consider proposals on public policy issues from doc. producers whose prior work has demonstrated ability to combine good journalism & filmmaking. Submit 1-2 pg treatment or roughcut of completed (or near completed) film on 3/4" or VHS. Deadline: Feb. 1 for 1990 season. Contact: Marrie Campbell, series editor, *Frontline*, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134.

Fulbright Program w/ United Kingdom: Council for Int'l Exchange of Scholars announces opening of competition for professional fellowships in filmmaking & film & TV prod. 1 award will be avail. in film & TV prod. each yr. for the next 3 yrs. Appl. deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: Steven Blodgett, CIES, 11 Dupont Circle, NW, Ste. 300, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 939-5410.

Astrea Foundation: Funds for women's orgs in PA, NY, NJ, RI, DC, MD, MA, DE & CT. Will consider media projects designed to serve as educ. & organizing tools to promote progressive social change. Grants from $500-5,000. Deadline: May 31. Appl. from Astrea Foundation, 666 Broadway, Ste. 610, New York, NY 10012; (212) 529-8021.

Corporation for Public Broadcasting: Open Solicitation deadlines: Jan. 6 & Apr. 21. Contact: Television Program Fund, CPB, 1111 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036.

National Endowment for the Arts grant deadline: Jan. 30 for AFI/NEA film preservation program. Contact: Media Arts, NEA, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20506.

Film Bureau of Film/Video Arts offers grants to NY State exhibition programs sponsored by nonprofit organizations. Matching funds up to $300 avail. for film rentals & up to $200 per speaking engagement for presentations by filmmakers, producers, directors, technicians & scholars. Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: Charles Vassallo, Film Bureau Coordinator, F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-4797; (212) 673-9361.

Checkerboard Foundation invites appls for 1988-89 postproduction awards. 2-4 grants, from $5,000 to $10,000, awarded in Spring '89. Only NYS residents may apply. Deadline: Mar. 31. For appls, write: Checkerboard Foundation, Box 222, Ansonia Sta., New York, NY 10023.

Film News Nows Foundation offers fiscal sponsorship to independent minority and women film- and videomakers. For sponsorship to NYSCA (deadline March 1), send synopsis by Feb. 1 to: Film News Now, 335 W. 38th St., 5th fl., New York, NY 10018; (212) 971-6061.

INPUT Training Grants: Independents who produce programs for public TV eligible for grants covering airfare to Stockholm for May 21-27 INPUT '89 conference, w/ special consideration for those who can match


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funds for airfare costs. To apply, send cover sheet detailing appl. name, org., business & home address, phone nos., ethnic origin & amount of matching funds available; resumé of appl's production role in public TV; letter of recommendation from TV administrator. Deadline: Jan. 20. Mail to: US INPUT Secretariat, 2627 Millwood Ave., Columbia, SC 29205, attn. Sandie Pedlow; (803) 737-3434.

## Trims & Glitches

KUDOS to AIVF members awarded production grants from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting Program Fund Open Solicitations: Irving Saraf & Allie Light, *In the Shadow of the Stars*; John Schott, *Alive from Off Center*; Steven Okazaki, *Days of Waiting*; Hector Galan, *Legacies*; Marlon T. Riggs, *Color Adjustment: Blacks in Primetime*; Rose Economou & Hodding Carter, *The Fading Fortunes of the Quiet Army*; and Brian Kaufman & Daniel Poneman, *Argentina: Land of Promise, Land of Pain*.

CONGRATULATIONS to Bay Area independents awarded funds from the Film Arts Foundation Grants Program: Lynn Hershman, *First Person Plural*; Lynn Kirby, *Heatlamp* & Marlon Riggs, *Tongues Untied*.

CURTIS CHOY has been selected to receive one of three 1988 James D. Phelan Arts Awards in Filmmaking, with a cash prize of $2,500. Congrats!

CONGRATS to AIVF recipients of the New York State Council on the Arts Media Production grants: Ann Volkes, *Lee Grant: Definitions of an Independent Woman*; Jaime Barrios, *The New Crusaders*; Angelo Jannuzzi, *Song from Sing Sing*; Ilan Ziv, *Kitsch & Death*; Alex Hahn, *Dirt Site*; David Blair, *Wax Or, The Discovery of TV among the Bees*; Melvin McCray, *Dollie Robinson: The Woman & Her Times*; Betsy Newman, *The Spirit of the Dream...*; Linda Karpell, *Handprints*; Jill Godmilow, *The Lear Tapes*; Mary Lucier, *Noah's Raven*; Collis Davis, *Elegba's Strategem*; Shu Lea Cheang, *Color Schemes*; Daniel Riesenfeld, *South Africa, The Propaganda War*; Julie Zando, *Three Case Histories*; Amy Chen, *McCarthyism in Chinatown* & Tom Lopez, *Saratoga Springs*.

WRITERS GUILD EAST Foundation Video Documentary Fellowship winners are Jill Godmilow, Demetria Royals & Richard Wormser. Congratulations!

AIVF MEMBER Rosemary Ritvo & her partner Laverne Berry have received a National Endowment for the Humanities Production Grant for their drama *Traitor in My House*. Kudos!

NANCY LITTLEFIELD, executive director of Queens Public Access TV, has been elected to the YWCA's Academy of Women Achievers. Congrats!

KUDOS to Marco Williams, who received a New York State Council on the Arts Film Production award and was named a 1988 Fellow in Media by the New York Foundation for the Arts.

N.Y. EXPO awards have gone to several AIVF members: Elvent Ataman (narrative); Jem Cohem, Amy Kravitz (experimental); Karen Goodman, Shari Robertson, Ginny Durrin (documentary); Robert Gates, Nina Hasin (doc essay). Congrats!

KUDOS to Christine Choy & Renee Tajima, whose film *Who Killed Vincent Chin?* earned the 1st Hawaii Int'l Film Festival documentary award.


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## SUMMARY OF THE MINUTES OF THE AIVF/FIVF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

At its first meeting on October 15, 1988, the new AIVF Board of Directors elected officers. Regge Life, who is beginning his second year on the board, was elected chair; Skip Blumberg, a new board member, was elected treasurer. Robert Richter, Loni Ding and Wendy Lidell were re-elected to the positions of president, vice president, and secretary, respectively. The board also reestablished its standing committees: Membership/Public Relations, Advocacy, and Fundraising/Development.

The board resolved to draft letters of concern to the New York State Council on the Arts about the proposed merger of the Film and Media Programs and to the Rockefeller Foundation about a planned feasibility study for the creation of a new home video distribution entity.

Meeting on the heels of its 1988 Indie Awards program, the board reaffirmed its support for the awards event, but expressed an interest in exploring ways to make the program appeal to a broader range of AIVF members. The board tabled the discussion, but resolved at its next meeting to create an ad hoc committee to review the program and make specific recommendations. The next Indie Awards program is expected to take place in 1990.

The next board meeting was scheduled for January 14, 1989, with committees meeting the evening before. Members are encouraged to attend board meetings and get involved in committees. Confirm dates in advance. For more information, call AIVF at (212) 473-3400.

## AIVF THANKS

The Emergency Legislative Fund, which is being used to advocate a National Independent Program Service for public television, recently received a contribution from Mark Mannucci. Thanks.

## FIVF THANKS

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## CORRECTION

The "Program Notes" column in the November 1988 issue of *The Independent* incorrectly cited the International Center for 8mm Film and Video as the publishers of Bob Brodsky and Toni Treadway's *Super 8 in the Video Age*. In fact, Brodsky and Treadway self-published the book; they also self-distribute it.


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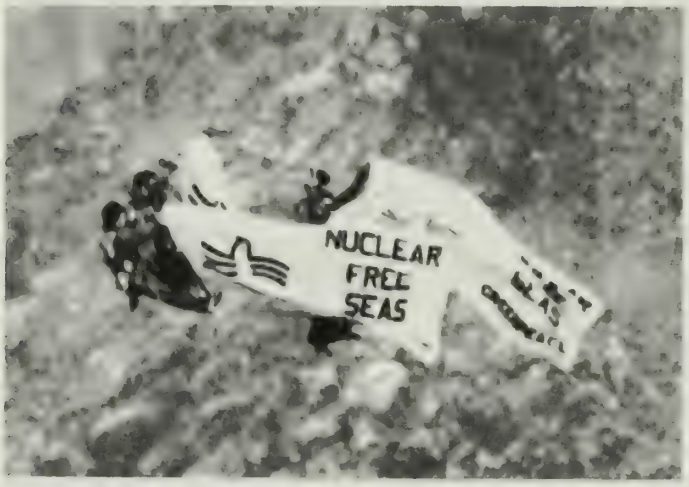


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**COVER:** Navy Admirals cut the cake in celebration of the first atomic tests in 1946 at the Bikini Atoll in the Pacific. *Radio Bikini*, Robert Stone's documentary on these tests and the U.S. Government's propaganda about them, was featured on PBS' new history series *The American Experience*. In "Clio Rides the Airwaves," Kathleen Hulser examines how history is depicted in this series and asks whether public television has kept pace with the kinds of questions about visual representation that have been posed by today's social historians. Photo: Historic Pictures Service.

FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY
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# NUCLEAR FREE TV




**Greenpeace climbers rappeling below the Golden Gate Bridge and displaying "Nuclear Free Seas" banners in view of the Navy ships entering San Francisco Bay.**

Photo: Mickey Freeman

As three Greenpeace climbers hung by ropes from the Golden Gate Bridge in a dramatic demonstration against nuclear weapons at sea on October 21, some of the Bay Area's best film- and videomakers were there to capture the protest on videotape.

Karen Topakian, Greenpeace's Regional Disarmament Coordinator, said the protest action, which occurred at the end of the Navy's annual military celebration Fleet Week, was intended to alert people "to the dangerous naval nuclear weapons race that has not been receiving nearly enough attention." As the protest evolved, two volunteer camera crews using donated video equipment documented the action on the bridge and on the bay. A ground crew, using the world's longest zoom lens made for video field production, was perched above Fort Point, on the southern end of the bridge. This crew kept in radio contact with a second team, flying over the bay in a helicopter. A motel room on Lombard Street in San Francisco served as the editing area, where footage was cut together to send, via satellite uplink, to the Cable News Network and Worldwide Television News Service for international airing.

The protest began at 11:45 in the morning, when four Greenpeace climbers prepared to unfurl an 11,000-square-foot flag beneath the bridge span that read, "Stop Nuclear Weapons At Sea." As they began their descent, however, the California Highway Patrol arrested one of the climbers and confiscated the flag, which would have been visible as far away as the Berkeley Hills. The remaining three climbers managed to rappel 150 feet below the span and display banners carrying the message, "Nuclear Free Seas," just as two Navy warships sailed underneath.

Hanging far above the water, the climbers coped with bridge workers who dangerously handled their ropes in an attempt to get them off the bridge. After two hours, the protesters lowered themselves onto a Coast Guard boat where they were taken into custody. In addition to the climbers, 15 other participants in the demonstration were charged with trespassing and disturbing the peace but were later released on their own recognizance.

David L. Brown, producer and codirector of the film/video production, said that the crew was "a remarkable group of highly skilled and politically conscious film- and videomakers who wanted to assist Greenpeace in getting their action documented and disseminated." Brown and 11 camera crews successfully videotaped last year's Greenpeace protest against Fleet Week.

Halfway into this year's shoot the California Highway Patrol revoked the Fort Point crew's film permit and shut them down, just before the Navy ships entered the mouth of the bay. As Brown explained, "The CHP monitored our radio and determined that we were part of the protest. We had a permit under Energon Films, which also stated that we were stringers for CNN, which was true. But we did not have CNN credentials. On that basis they revoked our permit."

Brown continued, "Merely because we were independents who may have been sympathetic to Greenpeace, the authorities shut us down and thereby denied us our First Amendment rights."

Despite this setback, the crews shot some dramatic footage and recorded a number of remarkable radio transmissions, some of which will be part of three separate Greenpeace documentaries. These recordings included communications between the organizers of the Greenpeace action via walky-talkies, as well as discussions between the Highway Patrol, bridge personnel, and the Coast

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**A camera crew in position to document the Greenpeace Golden Gate Bridge action on October 21. From left: Milt Wallace, Michael Bolner, Madeline Muir, Mickey Freeman, David Brown, and Lauretta Molitor.**

Photo: Janet Delaney

Guard while the action was in progress. Although the Worldwide Television News Service did not use their tape (KGO, a local TV station, provided them with theirs, which was then broadcast in dozens of countries), CNN welcomed the footage and aired it six times within 12 hours. Local station KRON too, used it to open their 11 o'clock newscast. Commenting on the video crew and the equipment donors, Greenpeace's Topakian said, "The Bay Area video crews and equipment donors have been invaluable in spreading the Greenpeace message worldwide."

This article is a version of a piece that appeared in the December 1988 issue of *Film/Tape World*.

MOLLY DELANEY

*Molly Delaney is a freelance writer living in San Francisco.*

## PELICULA DE INGLATERRA

About five years ago, a group of Latino filmmakers in Great Britain formed the Latin American Independent Film/Video Association (LAIFA). Among them was Miguel Pereira, an Argentinian whose *Veronica Cruz* is now playing commercially in Great Britain. Now LAIFA has 60 members, most of whom live in London, and they are interested in establishing contact with Latino filmmakers in the U.S. "We can put together packages of their films and distribute them to universities and festivals around Great Britain," filmmaker Lula Couling-Barreneche, who serves as LAIFA's administrator, told me in London.

LAIFA's upcoming touring series consist of subtitled films from the Peruvian and Brazilian embassies. But Couling-Barreneche is willing to consider written information and PAL tapes from Latino filmmakers in the U.S. Filmmakers should let her know about their film's genre (fiction or documentary), format (16mm, 35mm, or super 8), length, language (and whether it is subtitled), and if it is in color or black and white. LAIFA is able to purchase PAL tapes for about $30 each.

In addition to its distribution activity, LAIFA offers bilingual Spanish and English film and video courses. In 1989, it intends to sponsor a 16mm production and postproduction course for women. The Greater London Council gave LAIFA its film and video equipment, which it also lends to members at a low rate. But after Thatcher's conservative government abolished the Greater London Council, which it considered too left-wing, organizations like LAIFA have experienced financial difficulties and have had to devote an increasing amount of their energy to fundraising. LAIFA's equipment fee will have to go up, Couling-Barreneche told me, because the present rate covers only maintenance costs.

In late December, I stopped by Latin American House in North London, where LAIFA is located. This building is shared by 11 organizations, including the Colombian Committee for Human Rights, a Peruvian support group, and an advice service for women. Colombian filmmaker Marta Rodriguez was using LAIFA equipment to screen a video of the 90-minute film, *Love, Women and Flowers*, which she shot over the last five years with her late husband Jorge Silva. Channel Four in Britain wants to air a 50-minute version of this documentary about Colombians who work in the flower industry. Chemical pesticides not permitted in the U.S. are used in Colombian greenhouses, and this film focuses on the illnesses of Colombian women who work in a large company owned by a smug North American. It ends with their strike for better working conditions. Rodriguez is interested in using LAIFA equipment to make a longer video version of the film. Besides equipment, LAIFA offers information about grants and production advice to Latino filmmakers in Britain.

About three times per year, LAIFA organizes evening screenings of film, video, or slides in the 80-seat cinema at the Latin American House. Visitors to London can check the weekly magazines *Time Out* or *City Limits* for screening dates or contact: LAIFA, Latin American House, Kingsgate Place, London NW6 4TA, U.K.; tel. 01-372-6442.

KAREN ROSENBERG

*Karen Rosenberg is a writer whose work has appeared in* Sight and Sound, *the* Nation, *the* Boston Globe, *and elsewhere.*

## EUROPEAN BROADCASTING: NEW RULES, OLD GAME

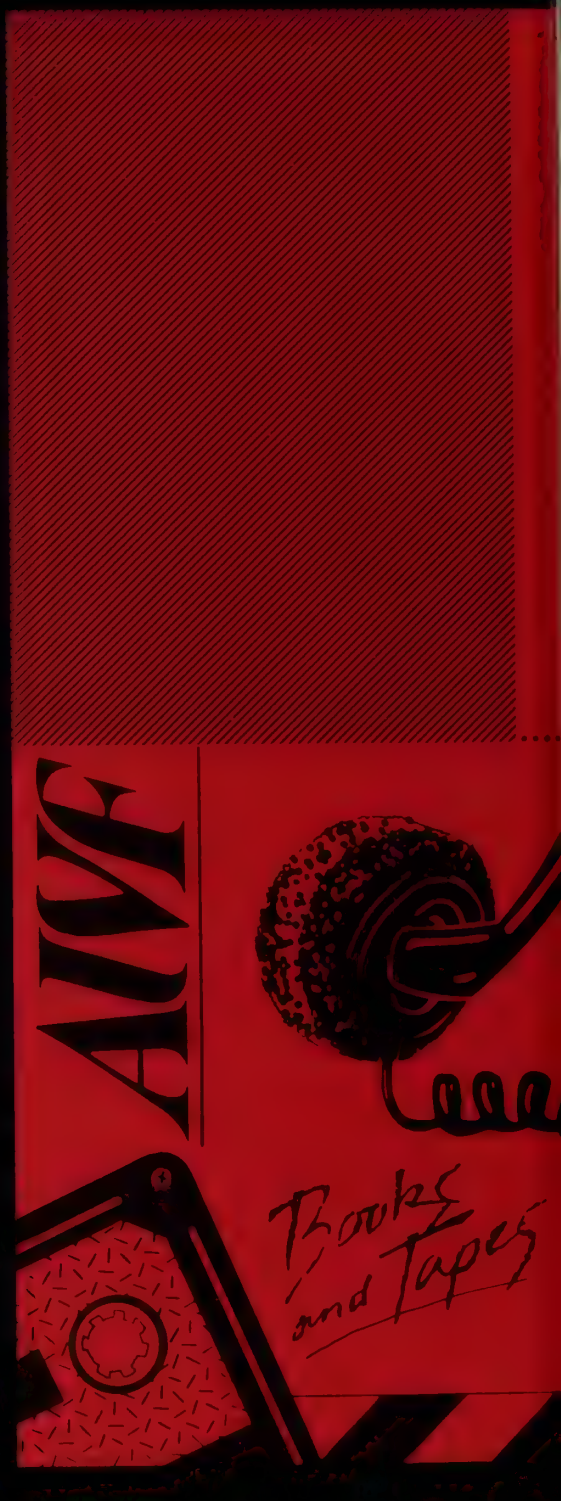
Europe is getting poised to enter a new era of broadcasting—the satellite age. Many viewers have had a taste of it, with such satellite channels as MTV-Europe and Rupert Murdoch's Sky Channel already beaming down music videos, U.S. series, and other subtitled fare. By the mid-1990s, dozens of trans-European channels will be available. To many European viewers, the future must look distinctly North American. Presently 50 to 80 percent of Europe's satellite programming is from the United States. This past winter, however, government officials from 22 European countries began to formulate some ground rules for transfrontier broadcasting to help stem the tide of non-European programming.

Two organizations, the Council of Europe and

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the European Community (Common Market), are in the process of drawing up TV regulations. Their documents, which have the weight of an international treaty and a directive (superceding national law), respectively, should be finalized this year. They address a variety of issues, including advertising, the right to block reception of foreign channels, children's television, and pornography. One chief area of concern to U.S. program producers and distributors is program quotas. Both the Council of Europe and the EC agree on the principle of limiting non-European programming, but percentages are still being worked out. The Council recommends "a majority of European programs when practicable," while the EC favors a ratio of 30 percent European, to rise to 60 percent over three years. Such quotas represent a key compromise between countries favoring stricter quotas, such as France, whose own law now requires 40 percent French and 48 percent European programming, and those promoting a market-driven system, whose main advocate is the United Kingdom.

While government ministers were discussing fiscal incentives to encourage investment in European programming, in December film director Richard Attenborough launched a closely related project. A new European film and television script development fund, which he will chair, has been instituted to award $2.4-million annually to approximately 100 European screenwriters. The fund is a project of the European Council, which is affiliated with the EC. When possible, the grants will be recouped from the production budgets of those scripts that are produced. The new development fund will be based in London in the offices of the British Film Institute, and will receive additional backing from a number of British institutions, including the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, and the British Academy of Film and Television Arts-Shell Venture.

While British broadcasters are thus encouraging indigenous European production, the Tory government is marching in a different direction. In November it sent shockwaves through the broadcasting industry with a 45-page White Paper, "Broadcasting in the 90s: Competition, Choice and Quality," which will serve as the blueprint for a Broadcasting Act, to be debated in Parliament later this fall. It calls for a vast overhaul of the British broadcasting system, shifting it away from its traditional public service philosophy and toward an increasingly competitive, commercial, and Americanized version of broadcasting. In the short term, the ITV system, comprising 15 franchises (which expire in 1993), will bear the brunt of the recommendations, but Channel Four and BBC will also be facing significant, if more gradual, alterations. The White Paper recommends:

• The introduction of a fifth terrestial channel, to be a commercial station. This would end ITV's monopoly on advertising, held since its advent in the 1950s. In addition, the paper suggests that one of the BBC channels should devote its evening hours to sponsored programming.

• Channel Four should sell its own advertising, thus ending its fiscal relationship with ITV. An alternative structure is still to be determined. The channel would, however, retain its special programming obligations.

• An auction system is being proposed to sell the franchises for the 15 ITV stations and the fifth channel. Franchises are currently awarded on the basis of program qualifications.

• BBC's system of support, now based on annual tax of all TV sets, would eventually be replaced by subscription funding.

• A new "light touch" regulatory body, the Independent Television Commission, would replace existing agencies. The recently formed Broadcasting Standards Council, which censors sex and violence on TV, would gain a statutory basis.

• 25 percent of programming would come from "independents" (a broadly defined term, covering everything from one-person productions to NBC Sports).

Thatcherites argue that the White Paper's recommendations will increase program diversity. Critics in the Labour Party and the broadcasting industry see it another way, claiming that, with an emphasis on pay-per-view and subscription television, diversity will be there only for those who can afford it. They also fear the effects of the auction system, as ITV franchises go to cash-rich bidders, squeezing out many of the smaller franchise holders who have abided by the public service approach and who have direct contact with their local communities. Not unexpectedly, international media baron Robert Maxwell already has announced his intention to bid for an ITV franchise. As Roy Hattersley, a Labour Party leader, notes, "Many of the new channels will do no more than offer vast profits to the tycoons of international television."

Funds raised by the auction process, which could amount to tens of millions of pounds, will be turned over to the national treasury. This has some U.S. broadcasters worried. They fear that the U.S. government, looking for ways to chip away at the deficit, may follow the British lead and begin to auction off broadcast licenses.

PATRICIA THOMSON

## THE BIG PICTURE: THEATRICAL RELEASES FOR *AMERICAN PLAYHOUSE*

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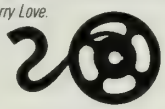
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mas, mini-series, and feature films. As of 1988, it is doubling the number of features it will put into theatrical distribution. Previously distributors picked up three to four films per year—among them *Smooth Talk*, *Testament*, *El Norte*, *A Flash of Green*, and *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*. Last year, however, the figure crept up to seven. "It was a fluke of timing," says series executive producer Lindsay Law. But having seen that the *American Playhouse* staff could handle the extra administrative burden, Law intends to keep the number of theatrical distribution deals at about that level and, in preparation, has already stepped up the number of scripts in development.

Incentives for this increased commitment to theatrical distribution are numerous. First among them, according to Law, is the increased ability it gives *American Playhouse* to attract "ideas and people. That's the most important part. It brings a body of work to us by people who might not necessarily want to make work for television," but would be interested in a dual theatrical/television venue.

Then there are the residual benefits. Perhaps the most attractive to *American Playhouse* executives is the quantum leap in publicity that goes with the theatrical turf. The series' budget for promotion is "nothing compared to what film distributors have," says *American Playhouse*'s publicist Les Schecter, of Schecter Cone Communications, who estimates that their budget for the entire season is less than many theatrical distributors spend promoting a single film. Distributors picking up *American Playhouse* coproductions pick up the tab for publicity, which has ranged between $500,000 and $5-million. For *American Playhouse*, the advertisements, reviews, and word of mouth that attend theatrical release add up to increased viewer awareness of its films by airtime. "It makes the work a known title to audiences," says Law. "Those films that have had theatrical distribution have been the largest audience getters"—no small bonus for the series' organizers, and for public television stations. Expectations are quite high in this regard for *Thin Blue Line* and *Stand and Deliver*, due to air during the 1989 spring season. (Also in the spring line-up are the feature films *Rachel River* and *Stacking*, which have had limited theatrical releases.)

Another benefit *American Playhouse* receives is income from theatrical sales. In general, this adds up to "very little" profit, according to Law. "If we're lucky, we'll see $100-200,000" from theatrical, cable, and/or home video sales. Occasionally, however, a box office smash will add significantly to the series' coffers. Law notes that the percentage of box office receipts *American Playhouse* received from *Stand and Deliver* was enough to "bail out" *The Wash*—a *Playhouse* production that received fine reviews but did poorly at the box office—and to help finance new initiatives.

PT

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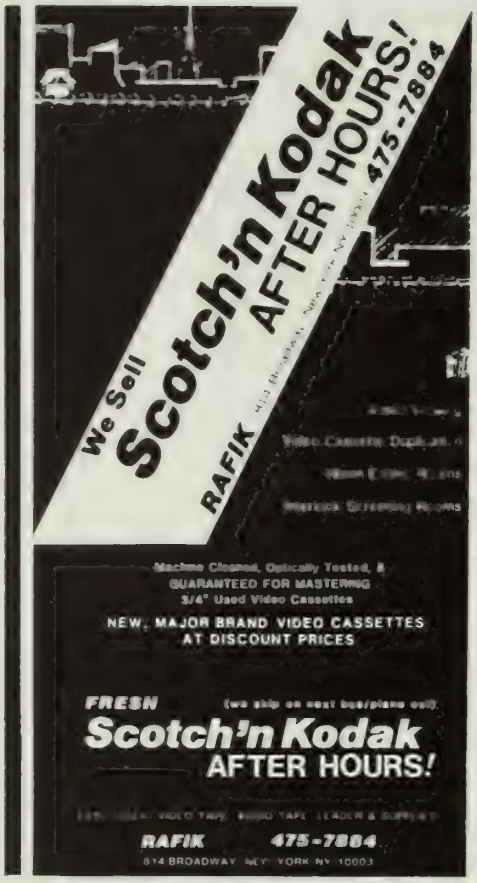
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## SEQUELS

IMAGE Film/Video Center in Atlanta has hired a new executive director, **Ruby Lerner**, to replace **Robin Reidy**, who moved to Seattle. Previously, Lerner was the executive director of Alternative ROOTS, a regional theater organization. Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, based in New York City, has also appointed a new executive director, **Sharon Gersten Luckman**, formerly executive director of the Twyla Tharp Dance Foundation. **Chloe Aaron**, who most recently served as director of Cultural and Children's Programming at KQED-San Francisco, has been named vice president for television by the WNYC Communications Group in New York City and will be responsible for all programming activities of the public television station. **Arthur Tsuchiya**, who worked as program analyst in the Media Program of the New York State Council on the Arts for six years and served as acting director since from November 1987 to December 1988, is now visiting professor of video at Middlebury College in Vermont. The Media Project in Portland, Oregon, has announced the departure of executive director **Brigette Sarabi**, who held that position since 1986. **Lise Yasui**, the first coordinator of the Philadelphia Independent Film/Video Association, has resigned in order to devote more time to her own media production.

□ □ □

As promised, the Socialist government in France has announced plans to disband the **Commission Nationale pour la Communication et les Libertés** (CNCL) regulatory board and replace it with the Conseil Superieur de l'Audiovisuel (CSA) ["Le PAF: The Changing French Audio-Visual Landscape," August/September 1988]. Among its other responsibilites, the CSA will oversee Canal Plus, the successful pay TV service.

□ □ □

The Fall 1988 edition of California Lawyers for the Arts' newsletter reports that the Small Business Administration has asked Congress to scrutinize the **commercial activities of nonprofit, tax exempt organizations** ["Commercial Breaks: Profits, Nonprofits, Taxes," October 1985]. Such activities are subject to the Unrelated Business Income Tax (UBIT) if the Internal Revenue Service determines that they are not related to the exempt educational, scientific, or cultural purpose of the organization. The Small Business Administration believes that nonprofits are granted an unfair advantage because the UBIT rules are not tough enough. The recommendation to modify and broaden the limits of the UBIT may be considered by the House Ways and Means Oversight Subcommittee during the 1989 session.

□ □ □

As of this year, the **Soviet Union's 39 film studios** must begin to self-finance their films ["Glasnost and Georgian Cinema," April 1988]. This policy shift will most likely result in more coproductions among USSR studios and an increase in joint ventures with foreign companies. The Soviet studios may either handle their own foreign sales or turn these over to one of the three newly consolidated sales divisions of Sovexportfilm. The exact nature of the contracts with foreign production entities is still to be determined.

□ □ □

The National League of Cities, the country's largest municipal lobbying organization, agreed upon policy recommendations for new **cable television legislation** at their annual membership meeting in December ["Cable Feels the Heat," June 1988]. The NLC advocates the restoration of basic cable rate regulation, the limitation of industry consolidation, and the entry of telephone companies into the cable TV business if they abide by the same rules concerning public access, franchise fees, etc. as apply to cable operators. In addition, the NLC will urge the courts to clarify cable's First Amendment rights, and grant cities immunity from monetary damages in lawsuits involving the First Amendment.

□ □ □

On January 3, the first day of the 101th Congress, Rep. John Dingell (D-Michigan) reintroduced a bill codifying the **Fairness Doctrine** on the House floor ["Sequels," March 1988]. This bill closely replicates that approved by Congress in 1987, which was subsequently vetoed by President Reagan. It is expected that Senator Ernest Hollings (D-South Carolina) will introduce a counterpart to Dingell's bill in the Senate sometime after January 25. Both Congressmen, who chair the House and Senate committees overseeing communications regulation, have vowed to block all legislation broadcasters seek until the Fairness Doctrine becomes law. While George Bush as Vice President opposed the Fairness Doctrine, as President he may decide not to veto the bill in the interest of establishing a smoother relationship with the Democratic Congress.

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# FUTURES TRADING: THE SCREENPLAY OPTION AGREEMENT

Todd Alan Price
and Paul Fadus

In the motion picture industry, a producer usually does not purchase a screenplay until it has been packaged. Packaging is the process whereby the producer estimates the budget needed to film the screenplay and also obtains commitments from actors and a director to work on the project. The producer is then able to combine script, budget, actors and director into one complete package, which can then be presented to a prospective financier in the hope of obtaining enough money to make the film. It is the Screenplay Option Agreement that allows the producer to assemble this package at a considerable savings.

The advantage of using the option agreement is that the producer can assemble the package without an outright purchase of the script. Instead, the producer and screenwriter come to an agreement that the producer will pay a percentage of the sale price of the script—which depends on many factors—in return for the exclusive right to purchase the script after a source of financing for the script is found.

An option agreement should begin by spelling out exactly what is being optioned. It should set forth a description of the property to be acquired. When describing the property, always include the origins of the script. Use phrases such as "an original screenplay" or "based on a novel by." An important part of this description that should always be included is a recitation of the copyright registration number of the script. The description of the property as well as the copyright registration number makes clear the precise nature of the option.

Once the agreement adequately describes the property that is being optioned, the next provision should clearly state that the option is exclusive—that is, it is offered to only one producer for the specific period of time stated in the agreement. Making the option exclusive protects the producer. Without exclusivity, the producer might spend months putting together a budget, negotiating with actors and directors, shopping around for financing, only to have the screenwriter sell the script to another producer.

In general, the optimum period that an option should remain open is one year. In addition, there should also be a clause allowing the renewal of the option for another year if the producer makes an additional payment to the writer. Of course, an option may run for as long as agreed upon between the producer and the writer, but the price paid for the option should be high enough to compensate the writer for having the material off the market for the option period. It would be ill-advised to grant an option for longer than three years.

Another important and often lengthy section of an option agreement is the description of rights that are acquired by the producer should the option be exercised. It's important to include all of the terms of the purchase of the screenplay, and these must be spelled out. An agreement to "agree later" on the terms is worthless. These terms might include, for example, the right to make a motion picture version of the script, the right to produce a television series based on the script, or the right to produce a theatrical remake based on the screenplay.

The next item to be included in an option agreement is the price to be paid, which should take into consideration a number of factors: the type of project, the screenwriter's reputation and experience, the producer's background and reputation, and the relative bargaining power of the producer and the screenwriter as well as their attorneys' negotiating prowess. Not only must the price paid for the option be stated, but the agreement must also detail how and when it is to be paid. Most often the screenwriter receives the first term option payment upon execution of the option agreement. If the option is renewed for a second term, the second option payment is ordinarily paid when the screenwriter is notified of the producer's desire to extend the option term. The payments made to the writer for the option are ordinarily deducted from the purchase price at the time the producer exercises the option and purchases the screenplay.

In addition to a fixed screenwriter's fee, the writer may participate in the profits of the project. This participation will usually be from the producer's share of net profits, usually ranging from one to five percent, depending upon the writer's bargaining strength. Suffice it to say, net profits should be carefully and clearly defined.

Since screenplays are often optioned by producers but financed by another entity, the right of the producer to assign rights in the screenplay to another entity is critical. Many screenwriters seek to limit the producer's right to assign her or his rights in the project to major studios (or at the very least, "mini-majors"). This is for the screenwriters' protection. By limiting the producer's right to assign rights in the screenplay, the writer attempts to limit the possibility that the script will be produced by a less than reputable film company.

The next important section of an option contract deals with the sometimes heavily negotiated area of screen credit for the writer. The agreement should contain a description of what credit the screenwriter will receive on screen as well as in paid advertisements. The description of the writer's credit should include the size and placement of the credit. For the producer's protection, any credit obligation accrued to the writer should be limited to credit given which is under the producer's control. Then if, for example, a newspaper inadvertently leaves out the screenwriter's credit, the producer will not be in breach of the agreement.

The next section of the agreement is that which triggers the option and gives notice to the writer that the screenplay is going to be purchased by the producer. The agreement should describe the steps necessary for the producer to exercise the option to purchase the screenplay. Included should be such terms as the time period within which the option must be exercised, how it must be exercised (such as "in writing"), and whether any money is to be paid at the time of execution of the option. Always specify that the option may only be exercised by written notice from the producer to the writer, detailing the intent to purchase the screenplay. The option should never be exercised by verbal notification, which could easily result in a misunderstanding between the parties. It is good practice to require the producer to accompany the letter with a check for the purchase price of the screenplay. (A check should also accompany the notice to renew the option.)

An essential part of the option agreement is the Literary Purchase Agreement (often referred to as an "Exhibit A contract"). This agreement details all the terms and conditions that will become effective if the option is exercised. As in the beginning of the option agreement, the literary purchase agreement first describes the property being purchased. After an appropriate description, the precise rights that the producer is being granted are set forth. It is to the producer's advantage that these rights be as broad as possible. Should the writer wish to reserve any rights in the screenplay, they should be clearly set forth. Although the duration of the rights needs to be explictly in-

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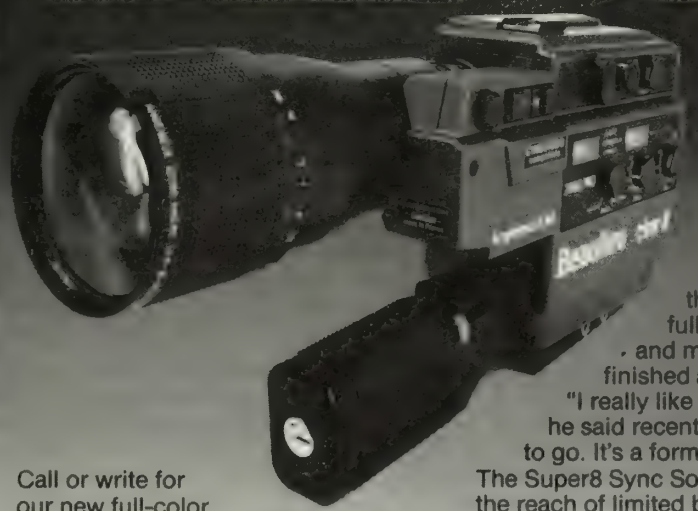
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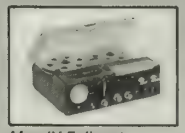
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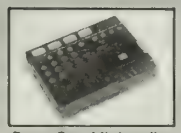
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cluded in the agreement, perpetual rights are the most desirous from the producer's view.

The literary purchase agreement must also state unambiguously that the producer has the right to adapt or rearrange the script in any manner and that all such modifications or rewrites are the property of the producer for which the producer has the right to obtain copyright. The amount of compensation that the writer will receive should be designated in the agreement. This may be a series of payments over time, in addition to a percentage of the producer's net profits, the size of which will depend upon the bargaining strength of the respective parties.

Crucial provisions in the literary purchase agreement are the warranty and indemnification clauses. With these the writer warrants that she or he is the sole author of the work and owner of it "free and clear" and that she or he has the right, power, and authority to enter into the agreement. The writer also agrees to indemnify the producer from all losses that result from a breach of the warranty that the work is original. In this way, should a third party claim that the work infringed their copyright and was not the writer's original material, the producer is legally protected.

Whatever credit the writer will receive should also be described and a clause included that gives the producer the right to use the writer's name in exploiting the film. The producer should also retain the right of assignment, in case she or he is unable to produce the film, thus allowing transfer of the property to others.

Although the literary purchase agreement is a separate document, it should be simultaneously negotiated, drafted, and signed with the option agreement. The terms of the option agreement and literary purchase agreement must not contradict each other. The literary purchase agreement should specify that it becomes null and void if the option is not exercised by the producer. Even after the agreement is signed by the parties, it should be held in escrow until the option is exercised. When the producer exercises the option to purchase the screenplay, the literary purchase agreement will go into effect, thus completing the screenplay option process.


*Todd Alan Price practices entertainment law in New York City and is an instructor of Film and Entertainment Law at the School of Visual Arts. He currently serves as co-chair of the Entertainment Law Committee of the New York County Lawyer's Association.*

*Paul Fadus is a recent graduate of Fordham Law School and works in Mr. Price's office.*


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# FILM ON THE FRONT LINE

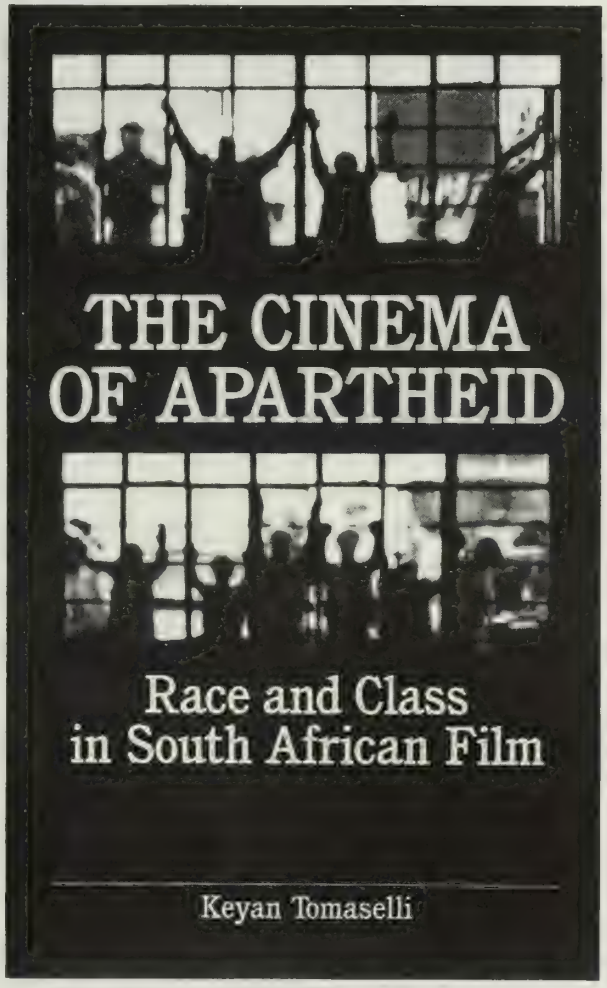
**The Cinema of Apartheid: Race and Class in South African Film**
*by Keyan Tomaselli*
*New York/Chicago: Smyrna/Lake View Press, 1988, 300 pp., $12.50 (paperback)*

Ntongela Masilela

To write a Marxist history of an art form or a cultural process in a time designated as postmodern—or at least with the logic of postmodernism dominating cultural debates—is one of the central challenges of our time. In Europe, three responses from a Marxist perspective have been put forth as the dominance of poststructuralist theory begins to ebb. Italian architecture critic Manfredo Tafuri has argued convincingly that the essential task today is not so much writing a history of modern art forms as writing a modern history of those forms. In his discussion of the politics of history writing, French philosopher Louis Althusser has theorized the imperative of producing a dialectical concept of the history of an art form rather than merely presenting a narrative account of its history. And in England, writing about the history of structures of the State, Perry Anderson has postulated that history writing should be theoretical and analytical as well as factual and descriptive in order to be adequately comprehensive.

Writing from a Marxist perspective and aware of these present-day challenges, Keyan Tomaselli has written a theoretically solid book that attempts to develop an overview of modern South African cinema. Employing the concepts of class and race as structuring principles and as ideological determinants of South African film, Tomaselli's *The Cinema of Apartheid* is not so much about the history of filmmaking in that country as it is about the modern conditions that shaped its cinema. In other words, Tomaselli has sought to unravel the historical bases of Apartheid cinema.

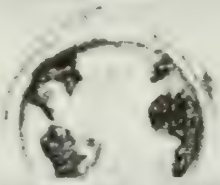
With a very few exceptions—which I will address later—South African cinema has imbibed and regurgitated the ideology of Apartheid as if it was a natural phenomenon, whereas it is an imposed historical condition. Tomaselli shrewdly observes that Apartheid is predicated on the paradoxical notion that racism is mainly an attribute of blacks. In its attempts to advance such insidious ideas, official (that is, consciously or unconsciously upholding Apartheid) South African cinema is probably the only national cinema in the world that has had the gall to purvey mediocrity as genial art. Witness the Broederbond antics of *The Gods Must Be Crazy* director Jamie Uys (Broederbond is a white Afrikaner Mafia that secretly formulates the rationale of Apartheid), who turned the tragedy of the displaced Khoisan people into a comedy rather than a serious historical lesson. Indeed, the ideological nature of the South African cinema is so extensive and claustrophobic that it has destroyed any aesthetic uses of film within the national culture.




In the first two impressive chapters of his book, titled "Censorship" and "Control by Subsidy," Tomaselli examines the institutional controls that the South African state uses to impose Apartheid on the nation's cinematic production. From the inception of the South African cinema in 1910—the same year that the modern South African nation was founded—to 1963, most censorship was imposed on imported films and concentrated on representations of sex and nudity. Throughout this half-century, official South African cinema never challenged the status quo of Apartheid. From 1963 onwards, censorship became directly political, since some films reversed this complacent attitude towards Apartheid. Government control is also practiced in the form of subsidies for film production, the topic of Tomaselli's second chapter. In South Africa, this system operates by funding only those films that overtly or tacitly promote the tenets of Apartheid. It's no coincidence that this kind of official support began in 1956, when oppositional forces were in the process of mounting their challenge to the government. As Tomaselli shows, the second major reason behind the policies of subsidization was that the government hoped to prevent the production of noncommercial films, especially those that displayed artistic intention and technical competence.

In this context, a very peculiar phenomenon emerged in the 1970s, one consonant with the perverted logic of Apartheid: the emergence of films for blacks about black people made in the African languages but written and directed by whites who do not speak these languages. (Here I must register a very strong objection to Tomaselli who consistently refers to black languages as "vernaculars," in contrast to English and Afrikaans, which are given the higher status of "languages." Zulu, Xhosa, Sesotho, etc. are languages. To think otherwise perpetuates colonialist ideology and prejudices.) In these films subsidized by the government, the neo-fascist ideology of Apartheid runs amok. Accurately, Tomaselli refers to this type of cinema as *films for blacks* and never as *black films* even though only blacks act in them—a very important distinction. Analytically, Tomaselli draws a distinction between these and Afrikaans films. In the former there is both an absence of "politics" and of whites. Hence conflict is eliminated, and individual solutions, rather than collective actions, are emphasized. In contrast, the Afrikaans films examine the traumas of urbanization and the "virtue" of the separation of the races. Tomaselli is at his best when he compares these processes and analyzes the formal configurations that resulted.

Although *The Cinema of Apartheid* is one of the most engaging and useful books ever written on a particular African national cinema, Tomaselli omits one of the country's major historical proc-



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esses: the mining revolution (the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley and gold in Johannesburg in the late nineteenth century), which totally transformed the historical, cultural, political, and social landscape of South Africa. It was the mining industry that set the stage for the emergence of the South African cinema. It was this same industry that transformed dance halls into cinema halls in the mining compounds, populated by the newly created black proletariat. The philosophy of Apartheid was first presented and justified in mining publications. Without considering the effects of this revolution, the emergence and the development of South African cinema becomes incomprehensible.

In his fascinating penultimate chapter, "Independent Cinema," Tomaselli situates the formation of the independent cinema in South Africa—which has persistently maintained its opposition to Apartheid—in the wider context of the formation of third world cinema: Brazilian Cinema Novo, Argentinian Tercine Cinema, and the African cinema of Ousmane Sembene. Tomaselli argues that the explosion of the independent, or oppositional, cinema in South Africa resulted from the establishment of film and television departments at the universities, which coincided with the reawakening of the labor and student movements in the 1980s. Many South African independent filmmakers based their work on these two areas of social mobilization. As opposed to being subsidized by the system of government funding explained and critiqued earlier in the book, most of these filmmakers have received funds from institutions outside government circles: the South African Council of Churches, European television stations, private benefactors, and so on. The present state of emergency in South Africa, which was declared 1985, has reduced the vigor and effectiveness of independent cinema, but it has by no means eliminated it. This sector of the South African cinema is impressive, both in terms of its innovation and in contribution to cultural debates. It has aligned itself with such new intellectual movements as the History Workshop at the University Witwatersrand and with various black intellectual historical forces.

Tomaselli's last chapter, "Social Polarization," deals with, among other things, the African National Congress' establishment of a film unit. Tomaselli believes that it is the independent cinema sector and the ANC film unit that will provide the foundation of a post-Apartheid cinema. In my view, Lionel Rogosin's 1959 film *ComeBack Africa*—some of which was shot secretly in South Africa and not allowed a screening there until 1988—prefigures this coming national cinema.

*Ntongela Masilela is a black South African independent filmmaker presently residing in exile in West Berlin, who is attached to Berlin Technical University.*




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# CLIO RIDES THE AIRWAVES
## History on Television



**In *Hearts and Hands*, featured on PBS' history series *The American Experience*, filmmaker Pat Ferrero makes creative use of quilt patterns to tell the story of women's involvement in the Underground Railroad and the temperance movement.**

Photo: American Hurrah Antiques

Kathleen Hulser

History on television usually packs all the allure of bad medicine: the nasty stuff goes down hard but is oh-so-good for us. We ingest it like bad medicine, too: swallowing with eyes squeezed shut. The populist challenge, then, is to make history programs for TV that do more than merely coat the pill with sugar. In response, a generation of film- and videomakers have been brewing some new recipes for marshalling dead facts, and a handful of their efforts can be seen in the first season of the Public Broadcasting Service's grab bag series *The American Experience*. Making popular television history poses another craft challenge as well: how can information/education and recreation be mixed to allay TV programmers' anxieties about the ratio of facts to fun? Independent producers also answer that call most provocatively, and *American Experience* has thus opened the door to a wider variety of approaches than we are accustomed to seeing in well-funded primetime series. New topics such as cityscapes of disaster, military propaganda as media spectacle, sexual transgressions of mill girls, and quilt design as popular propaganda take the place of epic events, martial conflagrations, and great men's biographies.

Sometimes painfully, the series asks, "Whose culture, whose history constitutes 'the American experience'?" As if in reply, the programs tend to favor the voiceless usually omitted from historical accounts. To address these poorly documented subjects, the shows' makers ransack the archives for a different reading of the past—at their best, inventing new interpretations of unconsecrated visual evidence such as advertisements, classified ads, postcards, patent medicine bottles, handbills, propaganda films, and architectural details. But like so many PBS projects, the series does not go nearly far enough. Because PBS—in this case, the stations that produced the series, WGBH-Boston, KCET-Los Angeles, and WNET-New York, along with executive producer Judy Crichton and her staff—still nervously subscribes to journalistic canons of objectivity, it balks at allowing strong points of view. A reluctance to permit explicit interpretations means that many individual shows—all made by different producers—manifest a naive faith in the reality and factuality of conventional representations. Unlike current thinking in the historical profession nowadays, the knower and the known maintain an illusory pristine distance from one another. This persistence of the Anglo-Saxon empirical creed seems peculiar indeed when we recall the serious self-critique of means and theories that have convulsed the history and the film/video fields for the past two decades.

Letting the pictures speak for themselves may be advisable if the pictures are orchestrated in ways that make their pictorial conventions clear. But to simply take images of American history as if they stand *outside* the investigation misses half the task and adventure of visual history. The most

egregious example of this occurs in *Views of a Vanishing Frontier* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, Craig B. Fisher and Helen Ashton Fisher), which analyzes the nineteenth-century drawings and paintings of a Swiss explorer of the West. The depictions of Indians and native artifacts are read anthropologically without any indication of how the cultural encounter between European and Mandan, Sioux, or Omaha shaped the perceptions of the artist. Meanwhile, the voiceover reassures us of the pictures' fidelity. No matter how fascinating the expedition, this is an inadequate use of visual evidence. To fulfill their several visual, entertainment, and ideological agendas, the programmers and producers need to think much more about how they wield the images they unearth, how narratives and pictures resonate, and what creative deployment of voice and effects tracks can add to the historical riches.

Is television history a genre? The answer to this question will clarify why some visual proof wins unquestioned acceptance and other strategies of pictorial persuasion seem dubious. Visual history, whether arranged as documentary, nonfiction, or docudrama, is most often a branch of narrative genre and thus orients the viewer to the story, not the evidence. Reading the pictures then plays second fiddle to the story, which is knit together as if the pictures themselves have no historical function other than illustrating a point or event. The prominence of the story in this configuration makes us forget how to evaluate evidence—indeed, we become unconscious of anything but the visuals as content. The question, then, is not so much whether history has TV genre attributes, but rather how it defines its relation to its genre. Unfortunately, rather than probing the nature of visual proof or the impact of ways of seeing, most of that discussion in the United States has centered on objectivity, attribution of sources, and neglected topics—journalistic parameters derived from pre-moving image days.

According to Crichton, documentary is the series' core format, as opposed to, say, biography or docudrama. The attachment to familiar documentary forms immediately shapes a preference for a certain style of conveying information. The even-handed reporting of reality as if the observer, camera crew, and editor were not molding events is the backbone of the mainstream documentary technique that has come under damaging attack for its manipulation of realities it claims to simply mirror. Ignoring that debate, *American Experience* aims at visual legitimacy through historical fact, rather than paying attention to visual history as a genre. Thus, hoary narrative conventions live on in too many of these pieces: A "bad things happen to good people" storyline organizes conflict, as in *Geronimo and the Apache Resistance* (Neil Goodwin and Lena Carr) and *The World That Moses Built* (Ed Gray and Mark Obenhaus), or the "grave host in studious setting" (played by historican David McCullough) signals that history is serious.

Meanwhile, since there appears to be so little reflection about the selection of images, few viewers will pause to ask themselves if they embody the historically significant or simply the most dramatic visual record researchers found. The show *Do You Mean There Are Still Real Cowboys?*" (Jon Blair, with Glenn Close), for instance, clearly arose as a series of sumptuous landscape shots decorated with cowboys, not a scrutiny of mythologies of the West as the narration claims. "Such is the tyranny of the moving image in tele-history, that the existence or non-existence of a piece of film may determine whether or not a particular historical point will be made," writes Colin McArthur in *Television and History*.[1] How can televised history maintain its credibility if viewers realize these grounds for choosing materials? Attempting to loosen the grip of this particular version of visual empiricism, we can perhaps learn how to create a more favorable climate for clarified positions that do not build their arguments largely on available footage.

Even when archival materials abound, the ways archives and interviews interact reflect interpretive choices, no matter how assiduously objectivity is pursued. Consider a famous recent example in PBS history that shows how an argument favoring a strong point of view could have pointed the debate around a controversial piece in a different direction. *Vietnam: A Television History* hewed to standard notions of journalistic objectivity, winning praise for its balance.[2] Much to the producers' surprise, the right-wing chose to attack its conclusions and produced a filmed rebuttal about how liberals lost the Vietnam War. Asian scholar Stephen Vlastos points out that a close reading of the series would show left- and right-wing analysts that the series fit pictures and story into liberal scenarios of the war, treating opposing voices as critiques when they were, in fact, only representative of politicians' and high officials' opinions.[3] The right-wing's response also attempted—less successfully—to achieve a tone of objectivity, substituting different comments and voiceovers. Neither group took the confrontation as an opportunity to advocate making political interpretations explicit: both sides remained addicted to the garment of objectivity that had served them so well. In 1963 E.H. Carr told an audience of historians, "[T]he historian chooses the right facts...applies the right standard of significance"...which is "partly dependent on his [*sic*] capacity to recognize the extent of his

1. Colin McArthur, *Television and History* (London: British Film Institute, 1978), p. 14.

2. The 1983 series was produced by WGBH, in association with Britain's Central Independent Television and France's Antenne 2, under executive producer Richard Ellison, with Stanley Karnow as chief reporter.

3. Stephen Vlastos, "Television Wars: Representation of the Vietnam War in Television Documentaries," *Radical History Review*, No. 36 (1986), pp. 115-132.



***Views of a Vanishing Frontier*, produced by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, tells the story of Prince Maximilian of Weid and artist Karl Bodmer's expedition up the Missouri River from 1832 to 1834 to study North American Indian tribes. The artist's sketches are here treated as anthropological data.**

Photo: Joslyn Art Museum

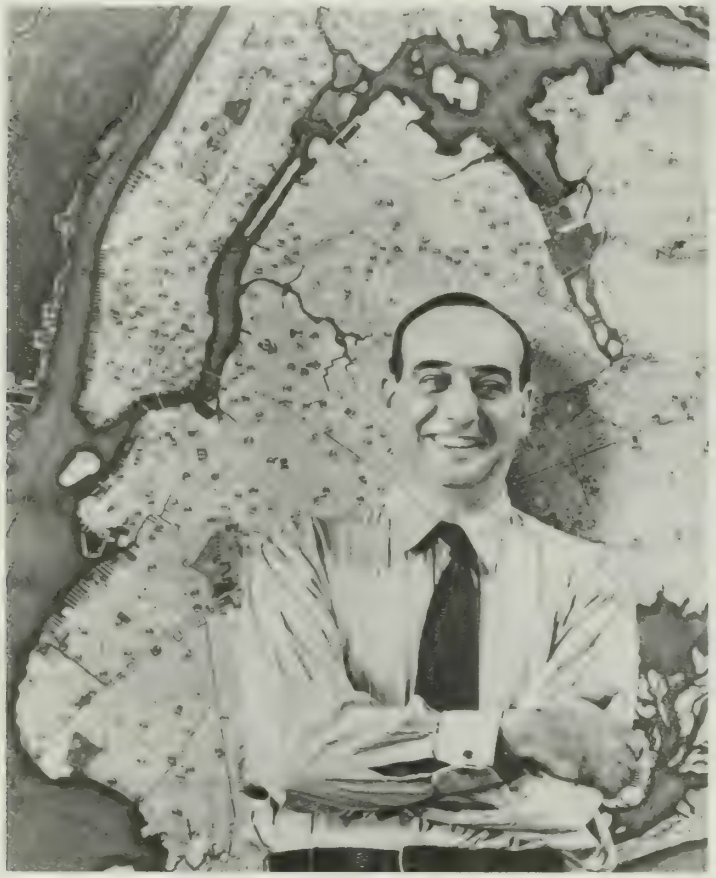
The autobiographical *Eric Sevareid—Not So Wild A Dream*, by Sevareid and Anthony Potter, does not reveal much about the journalist's—or the average citizen's—private life in the years preceding World War II, but instead serves as a vehicle for commentary by Sevareid on elements in his public life.

Photo: Culver Pictures



The program about New York City urban planning czar Robert Moses, *The World That Moses Built*, by Ed Gray and Mark Obenhaus, chooses biography as a way of understanding urban development.

Photo: Fortune Magazine



involvement in that situation."[4] In visual media under the reign of a condensation aesthetic, the choice and arrangement of facts is absolutely crucial. The more producers dare to make their point of view clear, the less manipulative and more stimulating the product is likely to be.

Stephen Brier, Joshua Brown, and their team of historian/filmmakers at the American Social History Project respond to this challenge in projects originally designed for community college audiences. Brown believes that carefully conceived social history confronts the one-sidedness of the historical record head-on, imaginatively answering the visual silences rather than cooperating with the biases of what evidence survives. Since few lithographs of the late-nineteenth century document the attitudes of workers during the era of railroad strikes, the ASHP team analyzed the surviving anti-striker graphics to weigh the evidence for their film *1877: The Grand Army of Starvation*. Instead of quoting texts that state how the owning classes feared the strikers and unemployed, they argue that the depiction of the workers with animal faces flowed from that very fear. Working in a period short on photographs and moving images did not deter the ASHP.

4. E.H. Carr, *What Is History?* (London: Pelican Books, 1963), originally an address to Oxford dons.

Rather it motivated them to make more explicit interventions in the material to further their historical analysis. Looking at *1877* and other ASHP pieces not part of *The American Experience*, we realize immediately that its producers are social historians (the group was formed by colleagues of Herbert Gutman dedicated to conveying history through popular media). In contrast, too many of *The American Experience* shows aspire to a smooth television look, leaving us in the dark about the reasons for their interest in a particular topic, their historical positions or methods.

If the makers of individual works in the series sometimes bury their interpretations, it is perhaps because the series itself has ambiguous relations with traditional modes of authority. We have seen how picture "facts" are treated as unquestionable data. We might go on to wonder why we do not see how historians change their minds about a historical question. It is a grasp of this process which would enlighten us about the status of the "new facts" the series offers. When we notice new objects of inquiry—women, the slave system, residues of popular culture—we do not know why they now command attention instead of the older revered subjects of history, such as the Presidents. Too many shows put their information in the off-screen narrations, editing pictures to text. The narrative of *Vanishing Views*, for instance, waves across a chasm to its visual track of paintings. *Not So Wild a Dream* (Eric Sevareid and Anthony Potter) parades a wealth of inorganic archival snippets to illustrate Sevareid's autobiographical commentaries on his impressions of Europe immediately before World War II erupted.

Other contemporary filmmakers, however, have cooked up different mixes of voices to locate the source of authority more precisely—even if we consider only techniques devised for narration. *Five Points* (an ASHP film) opens its story of Irish immigrant life in New York City with the disapproving homily of a Protestant reforming minister. That voice is later contradicted by the testimonies of Irish families living in the Five Points area, who offer a different explanation of their culture. Similarly, one *American Experience* offering, *Sins of Our Mothers* (David Hoffman and Matthew Collins), expertly interweaves voices and enriches its sound effects track




*Five Points* makes use of illustrations of the Irish working class and other immigrants published in books and newspapers aimed at genteel readers. The documentary, by the American Social History Project, exposes the bias inherent in such visual representations.

Courtesy filmmakers

In *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*, by Connie Field, five women who joined the workforce during World War II comment on the government's use of propaganda posters, films, newsreels, and music first to get them to work in the factories, then after the war to send them back into the kitchens.

Photo: U.S. Government Poster




with a dramatic chorus of whispers and tongue-cluckings that convey the potent role of gossip in enforcing community standards. The multiple perspectives in the film's narration stem from enthusiastic collaborations with local historians and on-site observers in Maine, and the film's primary, but not only, narrative voice is supplied by 89-year-old Nettie Mitchell. *Sins* constructs and reconstructs memory, and its authority derives from a mix of "facts" and meditation on the problems of historical representation. It is as much about oral history and the uses of local legends as changing notions of sin and small town society.

At another level, *American Experience*'s tentative plunge into social history that questions traditional forms of expertise is undermined by its casting of a conventional patriarchal figure to introduce and conclude each show. Historian David McCullough's opening remarks usually attempt to catch our attention and steer us to important issues, but he is so unsure of whom he is addressing that, for example, he can find little more to say about *Eudora Welty—One Writer's Beginnings* (Patchy Wheatley) than that the book inspiring the film portrait lingered long on the bestseller list. Consider the difference between that self-conscious celebrity hook and how *Sins of Our Mothers* contextualizes its link to the booksellers' front rack. Producers Hoffman and Collins treat the same intriguing incident of nineteenth-century incest and ostracism that Judith Rosner's potboiler *Emmeline* does, but they link their historical exploration to the popular novel's natural and legitimate curiosity about sex and sin in the nineteenth century, gently justifying their common ground with the bestseller while clarifying their differences in method.

In many recent documentaries the role and authority of "talking head witnesses" who provide the raw material for first-person narrative histories have incited controversies. In a 1986 article in the *Nation*, historian Jesse Lemisch criticizes what he terms the "voice of the first person heroic"[5] in many left-wing films of the last 15 years, lambasting the resurrection of discredited 1930s Popular Front aesthetics that militantly present a partial picture of history as the whole truth. He complains not about the amount of talking but the dearth of vigorous questioning in these productions. Lemisch believes that oral history (the switch in authority so valued by left historians as granting access to the grassroots point of view) in films like *Union Maids*, *The Good Fight*, and *Seeing Red* is betrayed by its naive use: a string of first-person statements on the soundtrack must be true because X, Y, and Z say so. This method, he contends, caricatures the trial by jury system because its lacks cross-examination to probe the memory or testimony. To offset this tendency Lemisch calls for more critical voices.

One example of this kind of cinematic oral history, *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* (Connie Field)—which figures in the series but not in Lemisch's critique—does have contending voices: government propaganda statements frame the comments of its witnesses. While we hear

5. Jesse Lemisch, "I Dreamed I Saw MTV Last Night," the *Nation*, October 18, 1986; "Letters," the *Nation*, December 13, 1986; Jesse Lemisch, "Politics of Left Culture," the *Nation*, December 20, 1986.



***Indians, Outlaws and Angie Debo*, by Barbara Abrash and Martha Sandlin, profiles Debo (left), the Oklahoman historican and pioneer who risked her career as a historian writing about a government conspiracy to rob the Indians of their oil-rich land.**

Courtesy *The American Experience*

women workers of the 1940s testify about the realities of their working lives, we see images of how during wartime, the state temporarily plugs women into male jobs without defeminizing them. Soon after V-E day, the same propaganda sources once again depict women as happy mothers and housewives. The juxtaposition of shifting government fantasies of what women ought to do, and the plain-spoken and moving expressions of what women actually want to do encourages the audience to identify with the women workers forced out of their jobs in 1946, rather than with the government's heavy-handed persuasion in the name of society's greater good.

This example hints at the limits of Lemisch's critique, which takes insufficient notice of the rhetorical techniques that imagemakers use for impact. The effect achieved by filmed witnesses depends on the bond and identification of the spectator and the speaker. Aggressive questioning breaks the viewers' trance and pleasure. And, in some films built around the recollections of "talking head" witnesses, there's a case to be made for creating a sense of intimacy when the subjects have a negative historical image to overcome.

The controversy over talking heads raises a perennial dilemma for makers of popular history. How do you make visual history about people that goes beyond affectionate anecdote or personality piece? *American Experience* repeatedly runs this risk: half of 16 first season shows center on an individual. Although the series producers have not succumbed to the temptation to commission films celebrating heroic exploits, we might reasonably ask if biography is their chosen strategy for popularizing history, why not make a biography series? Filmmakers may reply by saying that social facts work better personified. In the case of Mark Obenhaus and Ed Gray's contribution to *The American Experience*, *The World That Moses Built*, the choice of New York City public works czar Robert Moses as a vehicle for understanding urban development in the twentieth century seems to make this point. But the question arises again when the filmmakers devote too much screen time to anecdotal comments from Moses' cronies on his character or creating a clichéd opposition between the autocrat Moses and the poor people he displaces, while they neglect his policies and programs to achieve this. End result? We remember Moses as a flawed great man but can not tell why.

*American Experience* wants to connect public and private spheres in new ways but too often only manages to be nosy about personal detail, while revering the more public documents dug up on the subject. Sevareid's *Not So Wild a Dream* is autobiography but uses little material that reveals a private life. Instead we are treated to recitations of the public elements of the journalist's experiences, proffered as stand-ins for average American perceptions of the world. *Indians, Outlaws and Angie Debo* (Barbara Abrash and Martha Sandlin), a portrait of an independent Oklahoman historian chronicling the Indian past, fails to connect her work to admittedly charming scenes of Debo puttering around in her own kitchen at nearly 100 years of age. At the same time, the emotional stimulation of catching a glimpse of people's private lives takes precedence over meaningful, interpretable visual stimulation in many of the series' programs. Worse, what visuals do appear function at a very low level of evidence. John F. Kennedy sweats in the summer heat of his desegregation crisis in Robert Drew's *Kennedy vs. Wallace*; Debo keeps scrupulous files; highway builder Moses doesn't know how to drive. But we seldom see filmmakers using personal materials, say snapshots and memorabilia, to make points that generalize people's lives. Concern with the personal in these shows serves to buttress public achievements or document personality: Debo's disciplined work habits help her maintain her productivity as a historian; Robert Kennedy brings his kids to his office.

The only program in *The American Experience* list that ambitiously speculates about personal life, *Sins of Our Mothers*, asks what it means to be outcast, how an old woman exiled to a shack in a bog found food, whether she felt lonely. This is a broader range of questions than the details of character and personality that substitute for inquiry into private, subjective experience. Historians began to revise their views of the significance of the private sphere when they looked beyond political events to explain society. If we think about insights into the intersections of public and private concerns offered in Philip Aries' *Centuries of Childhood*, Peter Gay's *Education of the Senses*, or Katherine Kish Sklar's *Catherine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity*, we may become disappointed with the narrow interpretations of private life offered in too many historical films. Could *American Experience* include something like Alan Berliner's *Family Album*—an unusual assemblage of home movies, found audio and interviews—as a model of how to look closely at personal documentation to understand social life?

Storytelling is another technique that *Sins* uses to bridge the gap between the personal and public spheres. *Sins* tells one girl's story without casting the central character, Emeline. Rather, she emerges through a *Rashomon*-like collection of testimonies fleshing out the legend surrounding her and the related historical issues. Listening to local historian Nettie Mitchell as the camera plays across her mottled, gnarled hands, we get a close first reading of Emeline's tale, warm and personal. Later, as the investigation deepens, we learn about the status of Emeline the child, who may be no



**In the last decade, many filmmakers have presented provocative critiques of representation, such as that of U.S. government and nuclear industry propaganda in *Atomic Cafe*, by Kevin Rafferty, Jayne Loader, and Pierce Rafferty.**

Courtesy filmmakers

worse off leaving her impoverished family farm for work in the Lowell textile mills than being auctioned off as a pauper to work on another farm. We catch glimpses of the changing standard of sexuality that accompanied industrialization when we hear condemnations of Emeline's pregnancy by a mill foreman followed by sympathy for her inexperience and vulnerable situation. This approach lets the character of Emeline resonate with the contemporary codes of a New England town and with the way the twentieth century modified its outlook on the same questions.

*Hearts and Hands* (Pat Ferrero) also mines the private sphere using a storytelling technique, although without a central character. In Ferrero's film quilts tell the stories. These artifacts of popular culture help us read women's involvement with the ante-bellum Underground Railroad in beautiful train track patterns, survivals of African customs in slave and freedwomen's designs, and propaganda for the temperance movement expressed through blue and white "T" appliqué quilts. It is such creative readings of material artifacts that breathe life into narratives about the past, using visual evidence in conjunction with new forms of narration.

Both methods—storytelling and anthropological interpretation of material culture—work from the internal point of view of the subject. But how do visual historians introduce an element of public and social observation into their work? The technique of critical presentation of material opposing the film's perspective has been one of the most provocative in the last decade of independent film and video work. When *The Atomic Cafe* (Kevin Rafferty, Pierce Rafferty, and Jayne Loader) invites us to an evening of government pronuclear public information films, we are engaged at a level that combines a critique of representation with one of the government and the nuclear lobby. When the ASHP culls images of street life in ante-bellum New York City, it does not leave us unprepared to analyze nineteenth-century representational codes of illustrated magazines. The filmmakers, for instance, dramatize the convention of simultaneous action in a picture—cutting from police face to firing guns to fallen striker. The anarchist chicken cartoon and its philology lesson on sabotage in *The Wobblies* (Deborah Shaffer and Stewart Bird) have become justifiably famous as an exemplary description of the war of ideas that left political movements waged with the mass media until the end of World War I. We not only gain a historical interpretation from these sequences, we join in the mental exercise of sifting historical evidence.

Visual history requires a critique of representation, which can lead even a broad-based audience into interesting reflections on how what they see is supposed to prove a point. Two *American Experience* programs, *Radio Bikini* (Robert Stone) and *The Radio Priest* (Irv Drasnin), on Father Charles Coughlin, focus on how the media construed their subjects and thereby acknowledge the origins and status of the images the media produced. When *Radio Bikini* surveys the mountain of cameras and film aboard the destroyer approaching the Micronesian nuclear test site in 1946, we are ushered backstage to our government's intended mise-en-scène of history. When we look at 1930s footage of radio evangelist Father Coughlin high on a platform addressing cheering masses, we can instantly place this style of staging: except for his speaking English, we could be watching the crowd at a Nazi Party rally in Nuremberg. These two films demonstrate that visual history need not acquiesce to the genealogy of media spectacle. Rather, the historical mode of representation itself attracts our critical attention.

Tracking spatial relations, one of the camera's great fortes and underutilized as a method of analysis, is another tack that promises much for visual history projects. *The American Experience*'s opening program, *The Great San Francisco Earthquake* (Tom Weidlinger), for example, contains some wonderful material, but its narration often ignores what is most compelling in these images. While the commentary highlights rapid growth, big disaster, and rapid recovery, the images of the smoking ruins and city skeleton suggest a rich story of class relations. Although some of the comments in the script note ethnic and class patterns of San Francisco, there is another story to be read in Weidlinger's compilation. How close were buildings to one another? Who lived in what neighborhood? Were shops and apartments mixed? Did every house have indoor water, a stable?

Likewise, the transformation of a cityscape discussed in *The World That Moses Built* is a subject that could knock the socks off urban geographers. Instead, we are not even given a comprehensive overview of New York City before and after the reign of Moses, showing how the highway belts he built functioned, how his parks and recreation projects enforced ghetto bounda-



***The Radio Priest*, by Irv Drasnin, focuses on how the media construed their subject—Father Charles Coughlin, the controversial, ultra-rightist Depression-era priest and radio personality.**

Photo: National Archives



**For *The Great San Francisco Earthquake*, filmmaker Tom Weidlinger discovered some fascinating archival footage from this period of the city's history.**

Photo: San Francisco Earthquake Research Project

ries, and other tidbits tantalizingly mentioned in the text but uncharted in the pictures. Shots of ethnic street life suggest that slum clearance undermined the life of the city, but the filmmakers never edit together a picture of social relations in the city—although twentieth-century records of New York offers abundant materials.

By contrast, *Paterson*, a modest film recently completed by Kevin Duggan, sketches a much more complex texture of place. Paterson, New Jersey, is a crumbling industrial town, a former textile giant and a dump at the edge of Route 1 and 9, where even tractor trailers decline to exit. But Paterson is also the site of the precipitous Passaic Falls and an amazing lattice of bridges across millraces. The film deals with work in a specific city; it's half city portrait, half dramatic chronicle of attitudes about work. Paterson's scan of spatial contexts visualizes much of what we hear in dialogue from the discouraged young word-processors who report to the city's only high-rise each morning. Landscape is made intelligible and intelligent in this film through the attention to how human activity unfolds in specific places.

Paterson's most famous poet William Carlos Williams wrote, "no ideas but in things." Localism, intimacy, and detailed observations make visual social history convincing, as programs in *The American Experience* do at their best. But the series' promotion promising a glimpse of "exploring the national psyche," "building a free society," "connecting private and public spheres," and delineating a "civic religion" tends to dissolve tasty details in the same glutinous pluralism of the melting pot that has long obscured the distinctiveness of Americans' experiences. PBS' "burden of state"—creating a national identity through presentation of typical American images of the past—runs counter to the social history perspective underlying much of what is actually shown in the series. This mythic identity shows strain when the series' host addresses an audience that is presumed to need persuasion to stay tuned to the experience of "others." Couldn't the viewers be these excluded others or their children?

Integration of groups previously ignored into the American past is a delicate operation. It is tricky indeed to run an image track of society's disenfranchised, while simultaneously implying that the hitherto marginals can be incorporated in a national identity founded on the consciousness of the fully franchised. Often the most telling visual points made in individual shows work directly against the overall emphasis on assimilation, in which—finally—every ethnicity gets screen time to demonstrate its contribution to the American whole. The discomfort stems from the realization that *American Experience* remains mired willy-nilly in assumptions that adaptation is a one-way street. The excluded get their turn when their period of exclusion is placed far enough in the past to make sure they enter the mainstream on the mainstream's terms. This is the problem with the myth of national identity which seems to justify the series' generous funding and primetime slot. If *American Experience* can forsake its mission to create a homogeneous myth of national identity, it can draw on the talents of a rising generation of film- and videomakers to capture all the local detail that makes social history exciting. If not, it risks making the least of its undiscovered subjects and the promise of new visual history.

*Kathleen Hulser writes cultural criticism.*

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## Additional Readings

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# VIDEO NOUVEAU: THE MONTBELIARD VIDEO AND TELEVISION FESTIVAL



**Pete Lee Wilson appears in Jonnie Turpie's feature-length rock musical about youth, race relations, and telecommunications, *Out of Order*. Screened at the Montbeliard International Video and Television Festival in western France, the work was produced by the Birmingham Film/Video Workshop in association with the British Film Institute and Channel Four.**

Photo: John Sturrock, courtesy filmmakers

Amy Taubin

In its on-going quest for legitimization, the 20-year-old (i.e., relatively fledgling) field of U.S. independent video has responded eagerly to the attentions paid it by European programmers and festivals. While the only large video festival in the U.S. has been the American Film Institute's National Video Festival in Los Angeles (which, having lost its Sony funding, has been forced to limit its publicity, thus whittling its audience considerably), Europe boasts dozens, the most prestigious being the Montbeliard International Video and Television Festival in France and the World Wide Video Festival in the Netherlands. For many years, these festivals were language phobic. Their "talent scouts," who annually appeared at the Kitchen or Electronic Arts Intermix in New York City, were interested only in work that spoke what they saw as an international language of visual images. That their bias was a function of their limited knowledge of English is understandable. That they were, to the man (for men they were, almost without exception) far too arrogant to admit that this was the case is not. At any rate, long before there was MTV or *Alive from Off Center* to encourage video art down the contentless path, there was the lure of the European festival circuit.

About two years ago, the tide began to shift. In part, this was thanks to an increased fascination on the part of European intellectuals with the third world—countries in which state-of-the-art electronic art facilities were conspicuously lacking, and where the relationship between politics and cultural production is eye-catchingly clear. It was also apparent that, despite the on-going development of video postproduction technology, interest in electronic image processing and "visual humming" had run out. One of the 1988 prize winners at World Wide was *Rain* (*La Pluie*), an hour-long narrative about daily life in a small Mozambique village, threatened by drought and under constant guerilla attack by forces of the South African apartheid regime. Directed by Licinio Azevedo and Brigitte Bagnol, *Rain* was coproduced by the Mozambique National Film Institute and the Montbeliard Cultural Activity Center. It also showed up in the "information" section of the 1988 Montbeliard Festival.

Montbeliard is a small town (population: 30,000) in the west of France, totally dominated, as is the surrounding region, by the Peugeot auto industry. As part of a move to decentralize cultural activities beyond the Paris city limits, seven years ago the government funded the Montbeliard International Video Festival. A year-round operation with some very slight relationship to the local television station, it produces, at two year intervals, a week-long festival geared to the international independent video "community," in which

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the local population takes absolutely no interest—except insofar as it promotes tourism. The 1982 and 1984 festivals, dominated by the presence on the organizing committee of French video theoretician Jean-Paul Fargier, who writes for *Cahiers du Cinéma*, were video art oriented. But since Fargier's departure in 1985, the festival has become more concerned with television. "Canal Plus" has replaced "signifier/signified" as the operative buzz phrase. Director Pierre Bongiovanni describes the festival as a "dream of television...a way of criticizing the current state of television production and introducing a fantasy of its future."

The festival, whose theme in 1988 was "Ethics and Television," was divided into several sections: a competition; an international survey that included extremely interesting programs from Canada (a retrospective of documentaries by Robert Morin and a group show curated by Morin), two programs from the U.S. (one curated by Daniel Minahan from the Kitchen and the other by Dan Walworth from Artists Space, who selected a group of South Korean tapes), as well as programs from Brazil, Australia, and many Western European countries; an anthropology and current affairs program; an education sector; four video installations and three multi-media performances; and related panel discussions. The tensions between the more parochial, art-oriented competition and the politically conscious, eclectic informational section came to a head when the festival's daily journal reported that French video artist and competition juror Robert Cahen objected to the special award given to Robert Morin on the grounds that Morin's work was too "film derivative."

Projectors and monitors in the seven screening rooms were switched on at 9 a.m. and ran continuously until just before midnight. (In general, the screenings were well-organized and technically of high quality.) In addition to the regularly scheduled programs, several hundred tapes were available at the library on request—in the majority were competition rejects, some were far more interesting than most of the prize winners. With such abundance, everyone channel-switches with abandon, and ends up with a festival of her/his own devising. In addition to the aforementioned Morin retro and *Rain* (produced by festival organizer Michel Bongiovanni, who is also a prime mover behind Euroaim—the organization of European independents currently involved in generating an international database of independent production), the most compelling pieces I saw were Rotraut Pape's *Mutter, Vater Ist Tot* (an ironic, compact treatment of a *Dallas* scenario, produced with the German group M. Raskin Stichting) and Pape's scream-of-outrage *Le Gran Batard* (produced with the French group Frigo); Jonnie Turpie's *Out of Order* (an exuberant feature-length rock musical about youth, race relations, and telecommunications, set in Birmingham, England and made with the Channel Four funded Birmingham Workshop); and, in the U.S. selections, Julie Zando's *Hey Bud* and Jem Cohen's *This Is the History of New York*.

Guests of the festival—producers of tapes in the competition, curators of informational shows, panelists, judges, and critics—are treated extremely hospitably. The festival provides not only transportation and accommodations but what the U.S. contingent jovially referred to as food stamps—in sufficient quantities to see one through lunch and most of dinner in a variety of informal, mostly very good, restaurants.

For anyone who's interested, the grand prize went to the Belgian tape *Entre Deux Tours* (*Between Two Towers*), by Rob Rombout, a tastefully serious 15-minute narrative with some discreet electronic effects, formally reminiscent of early Alain Resnais. With the exception of *Out of Order*, the four big winners and the nine runner-ups all signaled their commitment to high art via their oppressive electronic mood music tracks. It may or may not be significant that none of the U.S. tapes in competition took a prize.

*Amy Taubin writes on film and television for the* Village Voice

# UNICA: FIVE DECADES OF A UNIQUE FESTIVAL

## Joaquín "Kino" García

What is amateur film- or videomaking? What is professional? To most of us in the American hemisphere—North, South, Central, and Caribbean—amateur film- or videomaking is associated with home movies, complete with various technical faults and inadequate knowledge about visual languages. "Amateur" is also usually associated with the size of the film or video stock—as in "amateur" formats like 8mm film or tape vs. "professional" formats such as 16mm film or one-inch videotape. Then there's a second factor in this discussion, related to economics. Those who work regularly and manage to earn a living as film/videomakers are considered "professionals," even though this definition excludes many independent film- and videomakers who need to work at many odd jobs (like in Puerto Rico) or freelance to make a living.

In Europe, however, the word "amateur" has acquired new meanings, and the amateur movement has produced excellent films and tapes as well as a pool of talented film/videomakers. This was made especially clear at the fiftieth film

festival of the International Union of Non-Professional Cinema, held last year in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, from September 23 to October 2, where 134 films from 21 countries were screened. In this context, amateur works are placed in the traditions of art, experimental, testimonial, and alternative films made by auteurs, as opposed to the productions of powerful institutions like commercial television and the major film studios. Nevertheless, many of the films seen at the UNICA festival could certainly be marketed in the U.S. as commercial productions, aside from the language barriers they would encounter here.

What UNICA offers is independent, noncommercial film/video productions varied in genre and style. As in any festival with such catholic selection practices, this year's event featured films and tapes ranging in quality from awful to excellent. Particularly interesting to me were the stylistic and thematic trends exhibited in different national programs from five geographic categories: Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and America (Puerto Rico and Argentina).

During a conversation at the festival, Argentinian delegate Carlos Zanarini commented that in over 1,000 years of history Western Europe has solved some of its most urgent social problems. It is truly the "old world"—tired, looking inward as if engaged in meditation—which is reflected in films that are aesthetically accomplished but lacking in substantial content and thematic depth. To a certain extent, I agree with his assessment. The films we watched from countries such as Austria, Switzerland, Finland, France, and West Germany, among others, were indeed visually beautiful, but in the majority of cases shallow. Documentaries and light fiction works abounded, whereas experimental and avant-garde works were largely absent in the programs representing these countries.

Of these, some of the most impressive were *Im Zeichen des Mondes* (*Under the Sign of the Moon*) and *Magic Don't Deny* from Austria and *Execution à la Lettre* (*Execution by Letter*) and *Sur la Malédiction de l'Or* (*The Curse of Gold*) from Switzerland, which features elegant and effective photography as well as an engaging narrative about gold miners in Minas Gerais, Brazil. *Avontour* (*Adventure*), an animated film from Holland; *A Yellow Cat Is a Fellow Cat*, made in Sweden; *Eaux Melées* and *Des Gouts et des Couleurs* from France. *Wanzen* (*Bugs*), which employs superb macro-photographic techniques, and *Malum* (*Evil*), a short mystery fiction film with superb acting and special effects from West Germany, were also outstanding entries. All these works were considered for medals.

The Eastern European films screened at the festival, mostly shot in 16mm, were generally dull and technically inferior compared to their Western European counterparts. I expected better, considering the resources for this type of film production available in many of these countries. Two humorous shorts and an animated docu-


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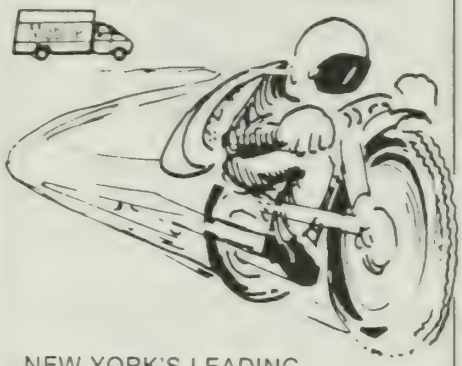
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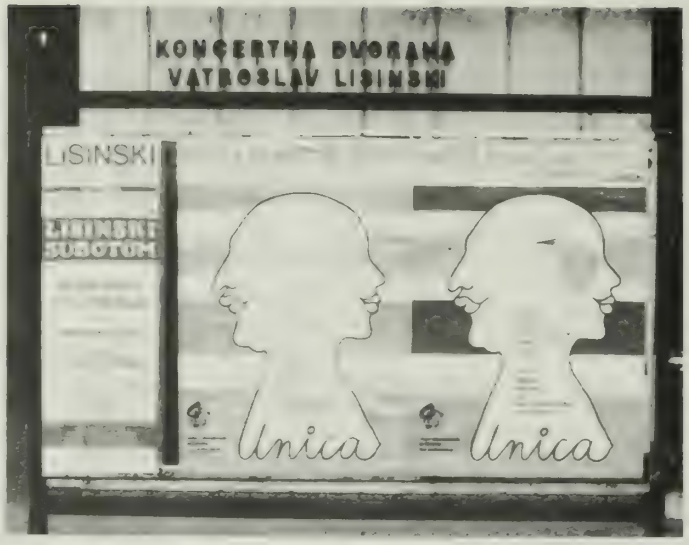
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**The fiftieth festival of the International Union of Non-Professional Cinema, UNICA, held in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, provoked a much-needed reexamination of the definitions of amateur and professional filmmaking.**

Photo Kino Garcia

mentary *Rügensage* (*The Legend of Rugen*) from East Germany, along with the Polish *Remuh*, were exceptions. The stunning black and white photography in *Remuh* complemented the film's metaphor for life: a train in movement occupied only by an old lady. The style brought to mind some of the best suspense films. Incredibly, *Remuh* wasn't considered for a medal.

All except one of the eight Soviet films shown at the 1988 UNICA festival carried a political protest message—perhaps reflecting the composition of the festival delegation that included Estonians, Armenians, and Ukranians, as well as Russians. Their presence in Yugoslavia exemplified some of the changes brought about by the policies of *perestroika* and *glasnost*. Although I found all of the Soviet selections worthwhile, the three strongest were *Man in a Boat*, by Laury Aasryllu; *Conductors*, by Erevan (which won a silver medal); and *Syndrom-K* (awarded a silver medal in the youth category). *Conductors*, about orchestra leaders, closely adheres to Eisenstein's theories of editing: the construction of meaning through dialectical film language, a confrontation of images that exposes the contradictions and conflicts of political forces. The cinema-verité style of this film further adds spontaneity and freshness. Straddling the line dividing dramatic narrative from experimental film, *Man in a Boat* presents an unorthodox, visually exquisite rendition of the story of a rural Estonian boy's adolescence. Like *Conductors*, protest against the power held by political leaders informs the clay animation film *Syndrom-K*.

The film- and videomakers from Yugoslavia, the festival's host country, demonstrated a clear preference for the experimental and avant-garde. In a discussion of film theory, Yugoslav filmmakers identified another category in addition to these—what they call "alternative," or "anti-film," although the distinction seems difficult to maintain. In this context, experimentation is defined in accordance with North American models or schools, with bows to Norman McLaren. The sheer quantity of experimental films made and preserved since the 1920s in this country alone is remarkable. Within this large category there is a predilection for animation. Still, the Yugoslav selection was generally unimpressive. One film worth mentioning is Darko Predanic's *Gorka Lika* (*Bitter Street*), an accomplished animated piece dealing with the bitter aspects of life. Another is *Off*, by Radoslav Pivac—the winner of a bronze medal in the avant-garde category—a two-part short story that takes place at a site where a romantic film is being shot and where a real romance between an actress and a director occurs. The camera remains static throughout. A black area at times obscures the center of the frame and, at other times, covers the edges of the frame—the area meant to designate off-camera space.

The work sent to the UNICA festival from America, represented by Puerto Rico and Argentina, exhibited the main elements of noncommercial film production in Latin American countries: the importance given to content and its ideological character over formal and technical questions. Latin Americans frequently have a social agenda, a historical project that is reflected in many of our films. That is the case with the Argentinian entry that won a gold medal, Rubén Estrella's *Corazón de Tango* (*Tango Heart*). The eight-minute film communicates all the nostalgia and profound feelings associated with tango, a music style born in the poor neighborhoods of Argentina. Estrella operates a small production company that makes advertising films, which explains the high production standards evident in his film: well-executed sound, choreography, acting, camerawork, and editing. Other Argentinian films also demonstrated why filmmaking in this country has achieved so much in the last five years. We can expect much from some of these young filmmakers in the years to come. Collectively, this work won the gold medal for the best national selection and garnered one bronze, two silver, and three gold medals.

Puerto Rico has been a member of UNICA for three years and won its first medal (bronze) with Luis Rodriguez-Munet's experimental film *Works by Munet*. Puerto Rico's second entry was the documentary *El Brigadista*, about a group of Puerto Ricans who volunteer to work in a coffee

farm in Nicaragua as part of that country's reconstruction effort.

What about the future of alternative, "nonprofessional" filmmaking? There are several factors that will affect this activity in the near future, among them developments in video, other technologies, and related resources, particularly in a world where the costs of production have risen steeply. Then again, there's the question of what's professional and what's amateur—an issue in the foreground at this festival. Clearly, the definitions and concepts governing this distinction will have to change. It seems relevant and important to take note of different solutions being forged to ameliorate technical problems—such as the incompatibility of video systems from country to country. One such advance has been the proliferation of VHS, now more or less an international standard. VHS cassettes are extremely portable and the large-screen projector systems used at UNICA demonstrated that this system can provide clear, sharp high-resolution images.

Amid these global developments and debates, the absence of the United States and other American countries with strong independent, noncommercial media traditions, such as Venezuela and Canada, is especially unfortunate. Interactions among the diverse film and video cultures represented within UNICA would likewise be enriched by the participation of these countries. Both those belonging to the organization and those outside it are deprived because of this lack of participation. This—like the inferior status associated with the concept of the amateur—is something UNICA would like to change.

*Joaquín "Kino" García is a filmmaker, freelance photographer, and writer from Puerto Rico. He is the author of* A Brief History of the Puertorican Cinema.

## IN BRIEF

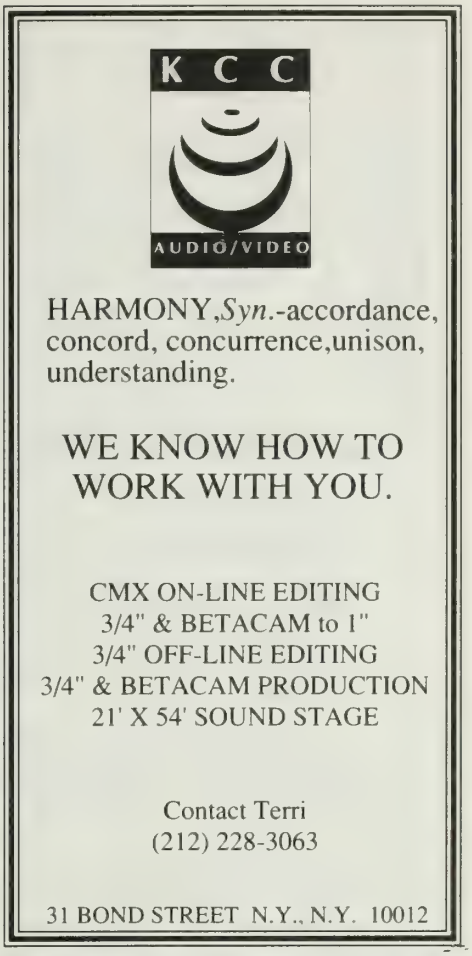
This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the **FIVF Festival Bureau.** Listings do not constitute an endorsement & since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. If your experience differs from our account, please let us know so we can improve our reliability.

### Domestic

AMPAS AND ACADEMY FOUNDATION STUDENT FILM AWARDS, June, CA. 16th annual competition, sponsored by Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, to support & encourage filmmakers w/ no prof. experience enrolled in accredited colleges & universities & whose work was made as result of student-teacher

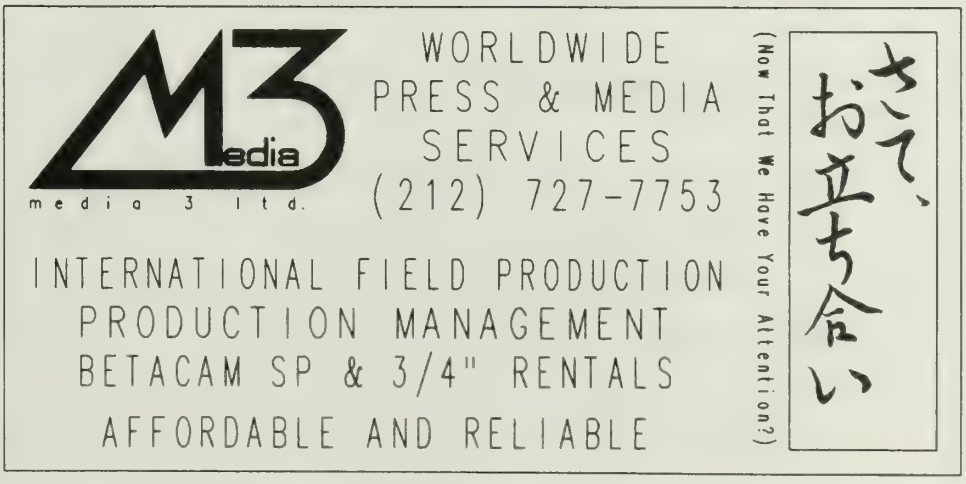












relationship. $2000 outstanding achievement awards in cats of animation, documentary, dramatic, experimental, up to 2 addt'l $1000 merit awards in these cats. Work must be under 60 mins. Judging done by regional coordinators & submitted to Academy. Format: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: early April. Regions: I (MN, NH, VT, MA, RI, CT): Ben Levin, Div. of Mass Communication, Emerson College, 100 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02116; (617) 578-8832; II (NJ, PA, DE, MD, DC, OH, VA, WV, KY): Fred Goldman, Middle Atlantic Film Board, 2338 Perot St., Philadelphia, PA 19130; (215) 978-4700; III (NY, PR): Daniel Glick, Brooklyn College Film Dept., Bedford Ave. & Ave. H, Brooklyn, NY 11210; (718) 780-5664; IV (NC, SC, TN, AR, GA, AL, FL, MS, LA, OK, TX, CO, NM, UT, AZ): Michael Cohn, Dept of Radio-TV-Film, CMA 6.118, Univ. of Texas, Austin, TX 78712-1091; (512) 471-4071; V (MI, IN, WI, MN, IL, IA, ND, SD, NE, KS, MO): Dan Ladely, Sheldon Film Theater, Univ. of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68588; (402) 472-5353; VI (MT, WY, ID, NV, AK, WA, OR, North CA): Bill Foster/Leslie Young, NW Film Study Ctr., Portland Art Assoc., 1219 SW Park, Portland, OR 97205; (503) 221-1156; VII (South CA, HI): Donald J. Zirpola, Communication Arts Dept., Loyola Marymount Univ., Loyola Blvd at W. 80 St., Los Angeles, CA 90045; (213) 642-3033.

ASIAN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, June, NY. Considered a premiere showcases for Asian & Asian American cinema in the US, annual noncompetitive fest, now in 12th yr, draws capacity crowds & extensive media coverage. Open to works by established & emerging filmmakers of Asian & Asian American heritage; several filmmakers have premiered their work here. Features & shorts in all cats (experimental, animation, doc, narrative, performance pieces & adaptations) accepted. No entry fee. Fest goes on 5-mo. int'l tour after NY opening. Format: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Mar. 31. Contact: exhibition director, AAIFF, Asian CineVision, 32 E. Broadway, New York, NY 10002; (212) 925-8685.

MOUNTAINFILM, May 26-29, CO. "Celebration of mountain-inspired film art," in Telluride in Rocky Mountains, now in 11th yr. Last yr featured 24 programs from 9 countries, along w/ 15 filmmakers who attended w/ work. Fest provides accommodations, some meals & passes for participating filmmakers. Competition: completed in last decade, dealing w/ themes of mountains, mountaineering, exploration & interpretation of wild places. Awards for best films on mountain spirit, mountaineering, technical climbing & mountain sports; special jury award & grand prize. Features & shorts accepted. Besides competition, cats incl.: general/historical interest (by invitation), works in progress, slide/multi-media programs, video, other programs selected by organizing committee. No entry fee. Format: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Apr. 30. Contact: Mountainfilm, Box 1088/540 W. Galena Ave., Telluride, CO 81435; (303) 728-4123.

SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL LESBIAN & GAY FILM FESTIVAL, June 16-25, CA. San Francisco's Lesbian/Gay Freedom Celebration is setting for competitive fest of works by & about lesbians & gay men, now in 13th yr & one of the largest of its kind. Feature, documentary, shorts & videos programmed & awards presented in several cats. Last yr audiences at landmark Castro Theatre & Roxie Cinema topped 20,000. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Mar. 31. Contact: Frameline, Box 14792, San Francisco, CA 94114; (415) 861-5245.

SINKING CREEK FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, June 10-17, TN. Now celebrating 20th anniv. as one of the South's leading showcases for ind. & student productions, competitive "celebration" expanded last yr to include video. Awards totalling $7500 given to winning entries in cats of young film/videomaker (to age 18), college film/videomaker, ind. film/videomaker. Special awards incl. Hubley Animation Award ($100), 2 $500 awards for feature works of special merit & 2 awards of $150 for excellence in doc & experimental work, 2 purchase awards. Approx. 60 films/videos shown, along w/ workshops/seminars (this yr forum on state of independent cinema) & guest programs. Held on campus of Vanderbilt Univ. in Nashville. Entry fees: $12-75, based on length. Format: 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Apr. 14 (features over 60 mins. & videos); Apr. 21 (work under 60 mins.). Contact: Mary Jane Coleman, Sinking Creek, Creekside Farm, 1250 Old Shiloh Rd., Box 1056, Greeneville, TN 37744; (615) 638-6524.

SLICE OF LIFE FILM & VIDEO SHOWCASE, July 14-16, PA. Held in conjunction w/ Central Pennsylvania Festival of Arts, 7th annual edition of int'l fest seeks experimental & doc films & videos under 30 mins that "depict the unique performances of everyday life—those moments of truth & beauty which would otherwise go unrecognized." Award-winning artists receive cash award, travel stipend & 2 nights accommodations at fest. Entry fee: $15. Format: 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Apr. 3. Contact: Documentary Resource Center, attn: Pat Morrissey, 106 Boalsburg Pike, Box 909, Lemont, PA 16851.

SUFFOLK COUNTY FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, June, NY. 6th annual competitive fest for works completed after 1980, w/ cats of arts & entertainment, sales & marketing, documentary & student. Program comprises public screenings & cable broadcast; winners & finalists may be selected for PBS series *Off-Hollywood* on WLIW-21. Awards: $7000 in cash, scholarships & equipment. Entry fees: $50-75 professional; $25 student. Format: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: May 1. Contact: Suffolk County Film & Video Festival, Dennison Bldg., 11th Fl., Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge, NY 11788; (516) 360-4800.

WORKS BY WOMEN FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, October, NY. Any film or video directed by a woman eligible for consideration by 13th edition of noncompetitive fest. Full-length & short works of all styles & genres included; all selections paid rental fee. Several film/videomakers invited to attend & lead discussions. Approx. 15 films/videos presented. No entry fee. Format: 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Apr. 30. Contact: Christina Bickford, Dept. of Media Services, Barnard College, Columbia Univ., 3009 Broadway, New York, NY 10027-6598; (212) 854-2418.

## Foreign

BANFF TELEVISION FESTIVAL, June, Canada. 10th anniv. of int'l competitive event for TV films & programs. Also provides TV professionals w/ seminars, panel discussions & on-demand screenings. Competition accepts films & programs in cats of TV features, limited series, continuing series, drama specials, TV comedies, social/political docs, popular science programs, art docs, performance specials & children's programs. Entries must have been made for TV, 1st broadcast between April 2, 1988 & April 1, 1989. $5000 CDN Grand Prize awarded to best of fest, along w/ 2 $2500 CDN special awards. Rockies also awarded. Format: 3/4". Entry fee: $150. Deadline: Apr. 1. Contact: Banff Television Festival, St. Julien Rd., Box 1020, Banff, Alberta, Canada, TOL 0C0; tel: (403) 762-3060; telex: (03) 822804 TV FEST BNF.

FIFARC: INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ON ARCHITECTURE, URBANISM & URBAN ENVIRONMENT, Nov. 29-Dec. 2, France. General theme of biennial fest is architecture & urban environment, but encompasses films dealing w/ urban social issues, e.g. Competitive, fest w/ special sections: "images of the working place" (especially interested in films from independent point of view) & "images of the city at the local level." In 1987, 320 films from 60 countries presented (76 in competition) to audiences of 22,000. Work must be completed after Jan. 1987. Full length features, shorts, docs & video accepted. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; fest will transfer entries to PAL & return both to NY. US rep Sylvie Thouard may be contacted for forms & info at 189 Thompson St., #16G, New York, NY 10012; (212) 254-2857; before U.S. deadline of May 1. She will preselect films to be sent to France via diplomatic pouch for final choice by selection committee. Deadline in France: June 1. Address in France: Entrepôt Laine, 3, rue Ferrère, B.P. 85, 33024 Bordeaux Cedex, France; tel: 56.52.97.99.

HAMBURG NO BUDGET SHORT FILM FESTIVAL, May 25-28, W. Germany. As "forum for young film talent," fest aims to develop audiences for film produced at extremely low cost. Competition shows short films & videos together; work which has received institutional support not admitted. Noncompetitive "Steppin' Out" section for work above "no-budget" level or recipient of institutional support. Special competition "Three Minute Quicky" for "films/videos w/ pep," maximum length 3 mins, theme: "fish." One panorama program will be for new English & US works. Format: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, video 8, 3/4", 1/2". DM20 rental fee paid for ea. screened entry. Deadline: Mar. 31. Contact: LAG FILM Hamburg e.V., No-Budget-Büro, Glasshüttenstr. 27, D-2000 Hamburg 36, W. Germany; tel: (040) 439-2710.

MIDNIGHT SUN FILM FESTIVAL, June 14-18, Finland. 4th edition of feature film fest held in Sodankylä, Lapland, Finland, 80 mi. north of the Arctic Circle, held during season of perpetual daylight (films screened 24 hrs/day). Noncompetitive, w/ no special rules or regulations, "arranged by filmmakers & enthusiasts w/ sole purpose of showing the best of films & creating a unique, friendly atmosphere for filmmakers & film lovers to meet." 40-50 features screened, w/ program consisting of selection of new films (directors invited), retrospectives of "masters" who attend as honorary guests, special screenings & old & new Finnish films. Screenings held in cinema, school gym & circus tent, w/ simultaneous Finnish translation. Film enthusiasts come from throughout country. Several US features played ea. yr. Format: 35mm; preview on cassette. Contact: Erkki Astala, executive director, Midnight Sun Film Festival, Väinämöisenkatu 19 A 4, SF-00100 Helsinki, Finland; tel: (358) 0 498 366; fax: (358) 0 498 661; telex: 125032 sesfi sf.

SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL, June, Australia. Now celebrating 36th yr, 1 of Australia's premiere film events, w/ program encompassing features, shorts, docs & retros. Past programs incl. substantial number of US independent films. Noncompetitive fest well-attended by most Australian distribs & TV buyers & has loyal & enthusiastic local audience. Entries must be Australian premieres completed in previous yr; all lengths, subjects, styles & genres considered. Entry fee: Format: 35mm,

16mm. Deadline: Apr. 1. Contact: Paul Byrnes, Sydney Film Festival, Box 25, Glebe, NSW, Australia 2037; tel: 660-3844; telex: AA75111.

TOKYO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL/YOUNG CINEMA, Sept. 29-Oct. 8, Japan. 3rd edition of fast growing biennial fest will incl. major int'l feature film competition for 16 films, awarding Grand Prix, special jury prize & awards to best director, actress, actor, artistic contribution & screenplay; Young Cinema, in which 14 feature works by young directors vie for large cash awards (last yr, Sakura Gold & Silver Prizes w/ ¥20-million & ¥10-million); invitational screenings of "uniquely significant" feature films; Japanese Cinema of Yesterday & Today section; an Asia-ASEAN fest & symposiums & seminars. Fest wants to be largest in Asia (along lines of Cannes, Venice & Berlin) & operates w/ substantial budget. Deadline for Young Cinema: Apr. 30. Contact: Organizing Committee, Tokyo International Film Festival, Asano No. 3 Bldg, 2-4-19 Ginza, Chuo-ku, Tokyo, 104 Japan; tel: (03) 563-6305; telex: J34548; fax: (03) 563-6310.

TRENTO INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF MOUNTAIN, EXPLORATION & ADVENTURE FILMS, May 28-June 3, Italy. Competitive fest offering prizes of L. 3-million ea. in cats of mountains, exploration, adventure, sport & video, as well as grand prize of L. 10-million & prizes of L. 5 million ea. to best fiction & documentary films. All films shown in competition receive certificate of participation. Work must be completed before 1986. Also shows films out of competition & in info section. Films must not show violence against people or environment. For feature fiction films, fest may help pay for Italian subtitling. Format: 35mm, 16mm. 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Apr. 15. Contact: Filmfestival Internazionale Montagna Esplorazione Avventura, Via S. Croce, 67, Centro S. Chiara, Trento, Italy; tel: (0461) 986120; fax: (0461) 37832.

TROIA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, June 15-27, Portugal. 1 of 3 major film events in Portugal, fest, now in 5th yr, held at holiday resort of Costa Azul on Portuguese coast. Competitive sections: "Free" for feature length fiction films & "Man & Nature" for documentary & full, medium-length & short films stressing importance of harmonious relationship between people & environment. Work must be Portuguese premiere, not awarded in other major fests. Awards: Grand Prizes of Gold, Silver & Bronze Dolphin. (Competitive sections only accept films from countries producing less than 25 films/yr). Info section incl. major films & collective retrospectives. Events incl. film market & symposium for TV coproductions. Fest attended by over 200 journalists, critics, film professionals & invited guests. US films shown during "American Film Day," which will also feature panel of US producers. Format: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Apr. 30. U.S. contact Thomas de la Cal, 50 E. 63rd St., #10D, New York, NY 10021; (212) 421-3099. Address in Portugal: Salvato Menezes, program director, Festival de Cinema de Tróia, 2902 Setúbal Codex, Tróia, Portugal; tel: (65) 44121; telex: 18 138 Troiam P; fax: 44162.


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**A radioactive waste burial site at the Savannah River Plant in Aiken, South Carolina—where six million cubic feet of contaminated material is buried in 192 acres—represents one of the dangerous aspects of the nuclear weapons manufacturing process described in *Building Bombs*, by Mark Mori and Susan Robinson.**

Courtesy videomakers

## Renee Tajima

**All the Love (Todo el Amor)** is a new, 30-minute video portrait of Salvadoran guerillas who were disabled in the war and evacuated to Cuba for treatment and rehabilitation. Produced on credit and faith, videomakers from the New York-based El Salvador Media Project shot with Betacam and video 8, following the men and women combatants from the battlefronts to rehabilitation centers. The story is based on the testimonies of these veterans of the civil war in El Salvador, who speak frankly of their experiences and their hopes for the country's future. Executed on a minimum budget, the production was logistically complex. The camera crew never met with their U.S.-based editors and coproducers. Combat scenes were shot on super 8, and the interviews were shot in video. The makers use the dual formats as an aesthetic device—super 8 film-to-tape transfers illustrate the past, while video is used to document the present. *All the Love* has screened at the Museum of Modern Art and received a 1988 Award of Merit from the Latin American Studies Association. *All the Love*: El Salvador Media Project, 335 W. 38th St., 5th fl., New York, NY 10018; (212) 714-9118.

**A Quilting of Hearts** does not take a dispassionate approach to the issue of AIDS. Instead of focusing on media or legal issues, producers Scott Auerbach, Lon Holmberg, and Keith McManus follow the everyday lives of several PLWAs (people living with AIDS) to look at the humanity that emerges in the face of the disease. Five subjects were photographed during the course of a year, allowing their stories to unfold without scripting or an instrusive narrator. Through day-to-day acts of courage and conviction, the producers hope to dispel the fear surrounding AIDS and encourage an intelligent, compassionate response. Intended for international distribution, the two-hour video documentary is slated for completion by March 1. *A Quilting of Hearts*: 972 Drewry St., N.W., Atlanta, GA 30306; (404) 881-0032; (301) 268-5587.

Polish-born independent Slawomir Grunberg has completed two documentaries that also examine the fate of PLWAs. **When the Family Gets AIDS** is a 28-minute portrait of a family of four: the mother, father, and youngest son all test HIV-positive. In the tape, the tension and drama of their lives unfold over a 15-month period. "Six months ago I though I was 100 percent guaranteed, and one night I woke up as a minority," says Bill, who was infected by his wife after she received a contaminated blood transfusion in the hospital. Bill was brutally attacked by a group of youth who recognized his face from a local paper as a PWLA. In the 58-minute **USAIDS: Small Town Dilemma**, Grunberg introduces us to six middle-American families who have all been hit by the crisis. They face the same isolation as Bill: neighbors often forbid their children to interact, and in one scene a family doctor locks the door of his clinic and calls the police when a family comes to have their sick boy treated. *When the Family Gets AIDS* and *USAIDS: Small Town Dilemma*: Slawomir Grunberg, 4 LaRue Rd., Spencer, NY 14883; (607) 589-4771; 274-3682.

It is not *what* happens, but the how and why that generate the tragic power of **Woman in the Wind**, a new dramatic film by director/cinematographer Gerardo Puglia and producer Gaetana Marrone, based on a screenplay by Stuart Kaminsky. Agatha is a rugged, proud, and stubborn woman. Apparently abandoned by her husband, she lives alone in a beautiful mountain wilderness. There, in the quiet, she is content to watch the seasons come and go, to simply exist, until Angelo appears. He is a mocking, tempting man who claims to have known her husband. All too quickly Angelo makes himself a part of Agatha's life. She fights her attraction to the stranger, loses that battle, then struggles to regain her dignity and independence. When Angelo's influence becomes apparent to Agatha's daughter, who wants to visit her mother, the woman makes one final, violent move to extricate herself from his magnetic force. Colleen Dewhurst stars as Agatha and Jay O. Sanders is Angelo in the one-hour film shot on location in Wyoming. The Arts and Entertainment network will premiere *Woman in the Wind* on its *Short Stories* series in January. *Woman in the Wind*: Gerardo Puglia, 8 College Rd., Princeton, NJ 08540; (609) 683-4648.

Videomakers Ann Eugenia Volkes and Ruth Lefkowitz have been awarded an $18,000 grant from the New York State Council on the Arts to produce **Lee Grant: Definitions of an Independent Woman**, a one-hour exploration of the life and work of the actress/filmmaker. Interviews, film clips, and news footage are interwoven with scenes of Grant at work. As an actress who achieved early success, she faced enormous obstacles: blacklisted for 12 years, her personal history reflects a spirit committed to survive during the "scoundrel time" of the McCarthy period. That experience informed Grant's artistic and political sensibilities as a filmmaker. Her documentaries—*Women of Willmar*, *What Sex Am I?*, *Down and Out in America*—look at Ameri-



**El Salvador Media Project's new release, *All the Love* (*Todo el Amor*), follows veterans of the civil war in El Salvador from the battlegrounds to rehabilitation centers in Cuba.**

Courtesy videomakers

can life from the point of view of the disenfranchised. *Lee Grant* is slated for completion in April. *Lee Grant*: Ann Eugenia Volkes and Ruth Lefkowitz, 329 E. 13th St., New York, NY 10003; (212) 677-7284; (212) 975-2637.

In **Unwasted Stories**, producer Kathleen Laughlin tackles issues our culture tends to ignore, centered around the garbage and pollutants that are the by-products of modern life. The 75-minute video includes innovative elements uncommon to documentaries on environmental policy. Poet Meridel Le Seuer reads excerpts from her 1945 history of the state *North Star*. There are also animation segments by Alison Morse, and illustrative postcards provide a counter-narrative. The tape features interviews with both officials and activists who speak about energy efficiency, composting, recylcing, environmental leadership, and the impending downtown Minneapolis garbage incinerator. Through *Unwasted Stories*, Laughlin calls for a sane environmental policy for Minnesota. *Unwasted Stories*: Intermedia Arts, 425 Ontario St., S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 627-4444.

Another water-related documentary from Minnesota is **America's Inland Coast: Portraits from the Great Lakes**, a new 56-minute tape by Richard Olsenius. Reaching 1,200 miles into the heartland of North America, the Great Lakes are among the world's major water resources. With 20 percent of the world's surface freshwater and over 10,000 miles of shoreline, these inland seas shape the lives and lifestyles of millions of Americans. Using personal narratives, Olsenius shapes a portrait of the region through the lives of four individuals. Andy LaFond, a third generation commercial fisherman, is struggling to keep his family business alive. Tugboat captain Clem Morrison has watched as 50 years of shipping changed the character of midwestern towns like Duluth. Along the hillsides of Traverse City, the tempering waters of Lake Michigan help winemaster Mark Johnson bring new vitality to the region's economy. And Geoff Pope, the 75-year-old skipper of the "Sheila Yates" explores a world of beauty and adventure along Lake Superior's Canadian coast. *America's Inland Coast*: Intermedia Arts, 425 Ontario St., S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 627-4444.

It's the hottest nuclear arms controversy in the U.S. today, provoking scientists, generals, presidential hopefuls, and ordinary citizens into debate. People across the country are worried that the mismanagement of the U.S. Energy Department's Savannah River Plant, outside Aiken, South Carolina, has created the most dangerous concentration of radioactive waste in the Southeast. Atlanta-based filmmakers Mark Mori and Susan Robinson bring attention to this crisis in **Building Bombs**, a newly-released documentary that looks at the environmental dangers and moral dilemma surrounding the plant and its 34 million gallons of lethal radioactive waste. Using rare archival footage, the filmmakers convey the pioneer spirit of the early 1950s in rural South Carolina, as the Savannah River Plant is opened to produce radioactive plutonium and tritium, the twin triggers of the U.S. nuclear arsenal. *Building Bombs* brings viewers "inside" a top secret weapons facility, probing the details of the manufacturing process as well as the emotional make-up of the people who create the bombs. Mori and Robinson focus on the personal stories of two men: Arthur Dexter, a veteran physicist at the plant, and William Lawless, the former senior engineer for nuclear waste management who exposed the slipshod system of disposal at the deteriorating facility. The horror stories related by these two men illustrate the attitudes of corporate and government officials and tell a frightening tale of the consequences of American weapons policy. *Building Bombs*: News Film, Box 5202, Sta. E, Atlanta, GA 30307; (404) 627-2485.

In **Promises to Keep**, independent producer Ginny Durrin tells the story of Mitch Snyder and the Community for Creative Non-Violence, and their four year battle to get funding to create a decent shelter for the homeless in Washington, D.C. The hour-long film uses archival clips and news reports to chronicle Snyder's struggle—with shades of Capra's Mr. Smith—to establish the shelter by confronting Washington's powerful on behalf of the poor. The soundtrack includes gospel music by the Richard Smallwood Singers and narration spoken by actor Martin Sheen, who played Snyder in a CBS made-for-television


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**Mark Gaspar's *An Empty Bed* depicts scenes from the lives of retired people—friends and acquaintances of the main character Bill Frayne, played by John Wylie.**

Photo: Michael Taylor

movie. *Promises to Keep* premiered in September at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington and will be released nationally on public television. *Promises to Keep*: Vickie Poynton, Durrin Productions, Inc., 1748 Kalorama Rd., N.W., Washington, DC; (202) 387-6700.

New York-based Locus Communications earned kudos as a finalist at the International Film and Video Festival in the Anthropology/Ethnic Studies category for its production of **Carnevale Irpino à New York**. Directed by Gerry Pallor and produced by Anna Lomax Chairetakis, *Carnevale Irpino* portrays a flamboyant version of Italian culture set in an American catering hall. The video documentary features a troupe of street performers celebrating a traditional Carnival with their Italian American compatriots. More than a staged concert, it's also a participatory event. The audience, in costume, merrily commemorates the death of Carnevale, a vagabond who has delighted and distressed his fellow citizens. With folk song and dance, including the renowned Tarantella Montemaranese, they recall his clamorous life. Locus produced the tape for the Institute for Italian American Studies. *Carnevale Irpino à New York*: Locus Communications, 151 W. 25th St., 3F, New York, NY 10001; (212) 242-0281.

Each year, on Labor Day, another New York community celebrates Carnival. **Celebration** is Karen Kramer's 29-minute film about Carnival on Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn, an event that brings together the largest Caribbean community in the United States. In her film, Kramer records the calypso rhythms and striking visual displays of Carnival bands, costumed performers, and huge crowds of spectators and participants. She also uses the film as an opportunity to talk to West Indian expatriates, who discuss the importance of Carnival in maintaining cultural identity and links with home cultures. *Celebration* was premiered at the Margaret Mead Film Festival and broadcast on WNET-New York last September. *Celebration*: Karen Kramer, 22 Leroy St., New York, NY 10014; (212) 691-3470.

Oscar Stringfellow, an upwardly mobile marionette, thought two housekeeping robots would make life easier for his puppet family. But they upset his dog, robbed him of his daughter's affection, and grabbed his wife's strings in the attic. Now Oscar's troubled. Can robots really think? Might *he* be some kind of robot? Might they be a kind of *him*? These questions are raised in the comedic **We're Not Robots, You Know!**, a video puppet opera from the Minnesota-based Synergenesis Corporation. The 47-minute tape, produced in association with Equinox Films and combining puppetry with computer graphics by Gene Ramsay and cinematographer Thomas E. Ramsay, tells philosopher-librettist Keith Genderson's story of creativity, freedom, and control. Eric Stokes' original composition, a tongue-in-cheek revival of the eighteenth-century puppet opera, is a barrage of teenage tantrum arias, canine pastorales, robotic rondos, and duets on American consumerism. *We're Not Robots, You Know!*: Synergenesis Corp., 4910 Fremont Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55409.

In a world where youth is idealized, **An Empty Bed** is a unique film about the concerns of retired people who are left to fend for themselves. The 56-minute film, written and directed by Mark Gasper, is about a day in the life of Bill Frayne, played by actor John Wylie, a gay man in his mid-sixties who lives alone in Greenwich Village. During the course of this typical day he encounters people, objects, and places that stir and revive memories from his past. Frayne's story is told nonsequentially, largely through flashbacks. It mirrors the character's processes of memory by connecting random thoughs and events to form a picture of his entire life. The film was photographed by Oren Rudavsky, a longtime independent filmmaker, and produced by Gasper and Victoria Larimore. *An Empty Bed* premiered at the 1988 Independent Feature Film Market in New York. *An Empty Bed*: Yankee-Oriole Co., 28-02 36 Ave., Astoria, NY 11106-3106; (718) 786-9706.

**Itam Hakim, Hopiit—An Indian Tale**, a videotape by Native American media artist Victor Masayesva Jr., has been released on home video by Chicago-based Facets Video as part of its Images Series. In this stylistically daring, poetic visualization of the Hopi Indians and their legends, myths, histories, and oral traditions the artist explores his people's legacy and traditions. Masayesva's visuals unfold in counterpoint to the words of an elder Hopi storyteller. The sounds of the ancient Hopi language and dramatic landscapes evoke the imagery and express the reverance for the Earth, whose caretakers the Hopi consider themselves to be. *Itam Hakim, Hopiit—An Indian Tale*: Facets Video, 1517 W. Fullerton, Chicago, IL 60614; (800) 331-6197.

**Cross Body Ride**, a 12.5-minute super 8 film, directed, shot, and edited by Jeff McMahon, features dancers David Zambrano and Donald Fleming and captures them in a moody duet. The film constantly shifts sense of place and time, intercutting black and white with color and still photographs with the moving image. The score was composed by Charles Nieland, who has previously collaborated with McMahon. *Cross Body Ride* received funding through a Choreographer's Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, in addition to private sources. It has already screened at the Exit Art First International Forum of Super 8 film, Encuentro de Cine Super 8 in Puerto Rico, and gay/lesbian film festivals in New York City, Buffalo, and Chicago. *Cross Body Ride*: Jeff McMahon, 512 E. 11th St., #4B, New York, NY 10009; (212) 677-3214.

**A masker celebrates Italian carnival in Queens, New York, in Gerry Pallor and Anna Lomax Chairetakis' *Carnevale Irpino à New York*.**

Courtesy videomakers



# CLASSIFIEDS

The Independent's **Classifieds** column includes all listings for "Buy • Rent • Sell," "Freelancers" & "Post-production" categories. It is restricted to members only. Each entry has a **250 character limit** & costs **$20 per issue.** Ads exceeding this length will be edited. Payment must be made at the time of submission. Anyone wishing to run a classified ad more than once must pay for each insertion & indicate the number of insertions on the submitted copy. Each classified ad must be typed, double-spaced & worded exactly as it should appear.

Deadlines for **Classifieds** will be respected. These are the 8th of each month, **two months** prior to the cover date, e.g., March 8 for the May issue. Make check or money order—no cash, please—payable to FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.

## Buy • Rent • Sell

EARN A MASTER'S DEGREE in Film & Video from the American University School of Communication in Washington, D.C. For info, write: School of Communication, Graduate Film and Video Program, The American University, Washington D.C. 20016.

FOR SALE: Arriflex S/B w/ APEC, con. & var. spd. motors, Cine 60 batt., Ang. 12-120, Ang. 5.9, Schn. 10, 25, 50, Tiffen, case. Zeiss Moviscope, Ediquip amp, Moviola, sync block & rewinds, Bolex splcr, Eiki proj. w/ rec & more. Asking $4,100, pkg or sep. Jerry (203) 359-8992.

AVAILABLE FOR RENT: Shooting stages (60 x 40, 50 x 25), 2 computerized motion control systems w/ 35mm camera, computer controlled Oxberry animation stand, lighting & grip eqpt., production office space. (212) 254-5400; FAX: 529-5506.

SALE! IKEGAMI HL95B camera w/ Fujinon 14 x 9mm zoom lens w/ 2x extender & macro capabilities, CA95C adapter for stand-alone capability. All NTSC formats. Exc. cond, scrupulously maintained. Great price! Avail. 3/1/89. (212) 627-9120 for details.

SEG: Crsspt Ltch 6119, $2150. TBC: FA-200, $3100. Camera: Pana 6000S1, batts. & chrgrs, $2250. Edit syst: 2 Pana AG-6500, Cntrlr AG-650, $6400. Port VCR: Pana VHS AG-2400, adptr & batts. $745. Monitors: 2 NEC 13" C13-304A, $515. Or b.o. (718) 956-9098.

FOR SALE: Computer: Amiga 1000, 512K & 1080 Monitor & 1300 Genlock & 1010 3.5" External disk drive & Alegra external memory, 512K, $1750. Low hours. As priced or best offer. Call (718) 956-9098.

SONY BVP-3A camera w/ CA-30 adaptor. Canon 13 x 9 w/ 2x lens + Sony BVV-1A recorder. Camera used approx. 1000 hrs, recorder less than 100 hrs. All in meticulous repair, used by only 2 people. $17,000. (612) 228-1860 or (612) 222-2109.

TRADE: Independent filmmaker w/ 6-plate Steenbeck interested in trading use of flatbed for office work space. If interested, please call (718) 875-9072.

MOVIOLA 6-plate flatbed 16mm editing tables for sale, M77 $5500. M86 $6500, or best offer, also spare M77 circuit cards. Dwight (617) 789-5887.

FOR SALE OR RENT: 9.5-57 lens $2,500, 10-150 ang. $3000. Moviola editing table $8000, 6 racks of amega dubbers w/ altec equalizer. Nagra 3 $1400, Bolex camera $200, NPR brace $50 & barney $50. Other equip. avail. to rent. Amy (212) 620-0084.

FOR SALE: 3/4" ENG pkg: Sony VO-4800 & Panasonic WV-6000. Includes batteries, AC adapter/charger, carry & travel cases: $2400. Sony DXC-1610 w/ CCU, AC adapter/charger: $395. Panasonic pk-959: $430. Michael (212) 691-0375.

FOR LEASE: Arri SR package, personal camera, $600-800/mo. For sale: Eclair NPR package, excellent cond., $2,500 or best offer. David (317) 283-3517.

SUCH A DEAL! Lightweight 16mm Frezzolini camera pkg for sale. Includes crystal sync body, 12-120 Angenieux zoom, 3 400' mags, 4 built-in 12-V batts, magnetic recording head, sound mixer, etc. $2600. Call Liz 718/622-2158.

FOR RENT in your space: Complete Sony 5850, 5800, RM440 off-line. Anvil cases fold out to form convenient table, cutting space. Reasonable rate. For Sale: 8-plate Steenbeck. 1000' rewind, reinforced carrying handles. VG cond. Must sell. $10,500 or b.o. (914) 478-0518.

PAINT & ANIMATION PACKAGE: Lumena 16 paint box, titler, animator, video tools, tips, artwork, etc. (worth over $50,000) will let go for $15,000 or best offer. Can divide. Also BCD, Targa, VVP. Ed, (212) 228-4024.

BOLEX ANIMATION JK motor, 16mm rflx, JK controller, frxbr, frwd, rev, cont, programmer, all $1500. (212) 228-4024.

ANGENIEUX 12/120 zoom. C-mount. Make an offer. (212) 228-4024.

## Freelancers

HELP WANTED: Feature film prod. facility looking for very bright, self-motivated office manager trainee w/ good writing, organizational & phone skills. Typing 60 wpm. Knowledge of Macintosh a plus. (718) 802-0200 between 9:30 & 6:30.

FILM PROD. CONTACTS: monthly newsletter listing SAG & nonunion films now in pre-prod. in US. Lists producers seeking talent & services for upcoming films. $39.95/yr. Sample issue $5. National Film Sources, 10 E. 39 St., #1017, NY, NY 10016; (800) 222-3844 for credit card orders.

3/4" VIDEO PRODUCTION: 3-tube Sony cameras, tripods, lights, audio, van, experienced cameraman. Very reasonable rates. Smart Video (212) 877-5545.

SONY M3A, VO 6800, tripod, mics, lites, monitor, operator, transportation in Houston area. Economical. Joe (713) 981-9803.

3 CHIPS ON THE SHOULDER. Multi-award winning cine/videographer available for interesting projects. 700+ 3 CCD Sony DXC M7 package. S-VHS, MII, Beta SP, lights, station wagon, the works. Supreme Videos, Tony (212) 753-1050.

COMPOSER: Award-winning composer available for film and video projects. Credits include *The Great San Francisco Earthquake* for PBS (*The American Experience*). Demo available on request. David Koblitz (212) 988-2961.

VIDEO PRODUCTION: 1/2", 3/4" and 1" masters—studio or location. Equipment rentals. 1/2" and 3/4" dubs. Film to tape transfers. Call Videoplex at (212) 807-8211.

AWARD WINNING VIDEOGRAPHER w/ Sony DXC 3000, 3 chip camera, Sennheiser sound, complete broadcast package. Experienced w/ news gathering, documentaries, dance, industrials & editing. Call John for rates: Ego Video (212) 475-6550.

3/4" & S-VHS well maintained equipment w/ operator. Low per diem rates. Cal Kingsley Allison (212) 519-6304.

DOCUMENTARY EDITOR w/ own 3/4" equipment. US and European TV credits. English and Spanish speaking. Good w/ narration and voiceover. Call Martin Lucas (718) 625-0031.

BETACAM—$350/day w/ tripod, lights, radio mics, and technician. 3/4" editing w/ editor $25/hr. Incl. Digital EFX, Amiga 2000 char. gen., live camera, TC reader. S-VHS Camcorder shoot w/ cameraman $190/day. Electronic Visions (212) 691-0375.

CAMERAMAN w/ own equipment available. 16 SR, 35 BL, superspeed lenses, video camera, sound equipment, lighting van. Passport. Certified scuba diver. Speak French, a little Spanish. Call (212) 929-7728.

SOUND MAN: Antonio Arroyo. Nagra, Sennheisers, Micron Radio equipment. Feature & doc credits. Bilingual & passport. For booking, call Amy at CEM-Crews (212) 620-0084.

BETACAM SP w/ complete remote package (including Vinten tripod, radio/shot mics, award-winning cameraman, transportation) available for your independent production. Call Hal at (201) 662-7526.

WANTED: FILM PRODUCER: Manhattan-based, award-winning director and writer are looking for experienced line producer for short film to be shot in April '89. Send current resume & letter to: Box 1045, Varrick St. Station, NY, NY 10014.

FILM EDITOR: Documentary or dramatic film. Reel, 3/4" or VHS upon request. Call Jack Walz (609) 893-7817 or write Box 796, Browns Mills, NJ 08015-0796.

EXPERIENCED EDITOR w/ flatbed space available for 16mm & 35mm features, docs, shorts, etc. Good rates. Call John at (212) 927-9062.

CINEMATOGRAPHER/SOUND recordist (ACL-Stellavox) ready to work for you. International experience and rates to suit. Call Alessandro Cavadini (212) 925-1500.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY available for dramatic films, 16 or 35mm productions of any length. Call to see my reel. John (201) 783-7360.

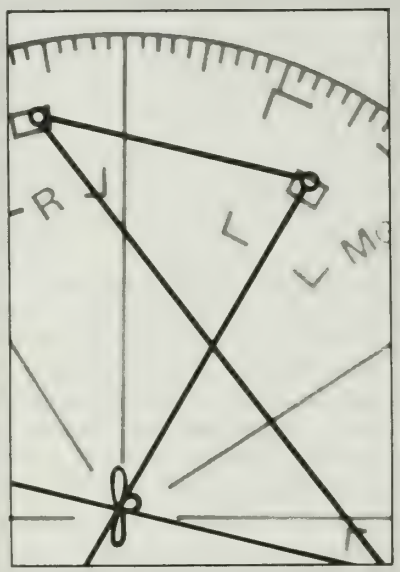
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PAL/SECAM/NTSC conversions: Very affordable standards conversion rates for AIVF/FIVF members. Also seeking foreign films for distrib. to consumer, educ., retail markets. Contact Zeeshan: (206) 365-3249; 12331 32 Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98125.

LOOKING FOR HELP? Are the odds against you? Give me a call on your next film or video production. I have the equipment and the experience to get the job done! Call Ralph at (718) 284-0223.

ARE YOU CURIOUS to see what your 16mm film might look like blown up to 35mm? Let me transfer those 16mm frames of film to 35mm still photos! I can also transfer 35mm slides to 16mm film. Call Ralph at (718) 284-0223.

AWARD-WINNING WRITER making move into film and video, will develop scripts for projects in different genres. Accurate, sensitive and stylish; will consider projects large and small; fees negotiable. Call Colette Hughes (212) 749-0566.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY w/ feature film, commercial, industrial experience. Self-owned 35mm, 16mm camera systems, lights, electrical, sync sound recording/playback system. Lowest rates in Tri-State area! Call (201) 798-8467.

3/4" & BETACAM prod. pkgs avail. Ikegami cameras, Sony decks, full sound & light gear. Best ENG crew in the city. Multi camera shoots. We've done it all, often & with the best. RAI (Italy), La Cinque (Paris), WTN (NYC), CBS (NYC). David Wallace (212) 594-7530.

SOUND RECORDIST/SOUND EDITOR: Complete Nagra package w/ mikes. Own Steenbeck editing room for sound cutting jobs. Lots of experience in doc & narrative. Good rates. Cathy Calderon (212) 580-2075.

WHATEVER YOU'RE LOOKING FOR, I can find. Call or write for brochure. Design Research, Dept. B, Box 1503, Bandor ME, 04401; (207) 941-0838.

CINEMATOGRAPHER & sound person to work on independent films. (718) 729-7481. Alina/Vincent. Long Live Independence!

CINEMATOGRAPHER w/ features, documentary & commercial credits avail. for film or video projects of any length. Personable w/ strong visual sense & excellent lighting. Own equipment, at a reasonable rate you can afford. Call for demo: Eric (718) 699-3485.

EDITOR/SOUND EDITOR w/ features & documentary experience avail. for your independent projects. Owns digital sound equipment & great sound FX library. Clean, fast & organized. Credits include award-winning films. Flexible rates. Call (718) 699-3485.

NEED HELP WITH YOUR PROJECTS? I have the experience & equipment (camera, recording & editing) for your next film or video production at a rate you can afford. Give me a call for your problems & I'll get the job done. Call (718) 699-4385.

## Postproduction

BOB BRODSKY & TONI TREADWAY: Super 8 & 8mm film-to-video mastering w/ scene-by-scene color correction to 1", Betacam & 3/4". By appointment only. Call (617) 666-3372.

NEGATIVE MATCHING: 16mm, super 16, 35mm. Credits include Jim Jarmusch, Wim Wenders, Lizzie Borden & Bruce Weber. Reliable results at reasonable rates. One White Glove, Tim Brennan, 321 W. 44th St., #411, New York, NY 10036; (212) 265-0787.

BROADCAST QUALITY EDITING: Edit from Betacam, 3/4" or 3/4" SP. $99/hr including operator, switcher, slo-mo. 50% discount on DVE for AIVF members. Call HDTV Enterprises, Inc., near Lincoln Center (212) 874-4524.

16MM FLATBEDS FOR RENT: 6-plate flatbeds for rent in your workspace or fully equipped downtown editing room w/ 24-hour access. Cheapest rates in NYC for independent filmmakers. Call Philmaster Productions (212) 873-4470.

BROADCAST QUALITY VIDEO EDITING: 3/4" Sony BVU-800s BVE 3000 Editor TBCs, switcher, slo-mo, freeze frames, chyron graphics. W/ editor. 900' sq. studio w/ lighting/sound/camera. $50/hr commercial, $35/hr indies. Downtown Brooklyn, A&S (718) 802-7750.

MAKE POSTPROD. A VACATION! Edit in Vermont. New editing suites in 3/4" and VHS (Sony 5800-5850 w/ RM450/JVC 6400-8600 off-line w/ FX). Next to major ski areas. Find out how relaxing, creative, convenient and economical we can be. David (802) 773-0510.

CINERGY COMMUNICATIONS CORP/Cinergy Sound and Video, 321 West 44th St., NY, NY 10036, offers substantial savings on complete postproduction packages for 16mm and 35mm film and 3/4" video. Please call Pat Kranish (212) 582-2900.

VIDEO 8 STUDIO: Off-line editing w/ color correction, fades, slo-mo, still, PCM dub/mix. Dupe/transfer: V8-3/4"-VHS. Low cost/high quality V8 production (shoot/edit/dupe. Sony Pro). Indies/artists welcome. Hourly rates or by project. Info: Frank Goldberg (212) 677-1679.

3/4" PROFESSIONAL VIDEOTAPE EDITING. Sony decks, TBC, color correct, full sound EQ, more. When you need an editor who is both good & fast, call 29th Street Video, (212) 594-7530. Also VHS off-line editing w/ wipes, fades etc. From $20/hr. Call for appt.

16MM CUTTING ROOMS: 8-plate & 6-plate fully equipped rooms, sound transfer facilities, 24-hr access. Downtown, near all subways and Canal St. Reasonable, negotiable rates. (212) 925-1500.

SUPER 8 24 fps transfers: scene-by-scene color correction via CCD telecine, Sony 700 Color Corrector w/ hue, phase, gamma compensation, neg-pos reserving, b&w tinting, wipes, etc., Tascam & Dolby C. $1-3/min. 1", 1/2", 3/4" & 3/4" SP + stock, $25/min. Gerald Yates (203) 359-8992.

POST ON THE COAST: relaxed time-code editing in Maine, hassle free, multi-format (3/4" SP & 1/2", incl. SEG freezes, Chyron, camera) software based A/B system w/ edit list generation. Cuts only as low as $20/hr. AIVF discount. Expanded Video (207) 773-7005.

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- Seminars on business, technical, and aesthetic issues
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AND

- A subscription to **THE INDEPENDENT** Film and Video Monthly, the only national film and video magazine tailored to your needs (10 issues per year)

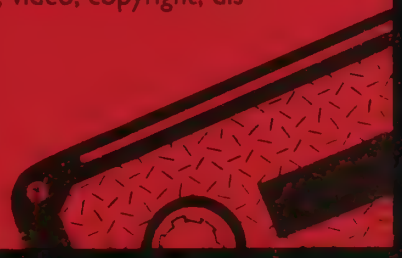
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# NOTICES

**Notices** are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. **The Independent** reserves the right to edit for length.

Deadlines for **Notices** will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date, e.g., March 8 for the May issue. Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

## Conferences • Workshops

NAMAC Annual Conference, devoted to Media & Education, will be held Mar. 18-21 in Rochester, NY. Incl. screenings of 2nd Annual Nat'l Student Film & Video Festival. Fee: $100 non-members, $75 members. Contact: Judy Natal, Visual Studies Workshop; (716) 442-8676.

University of Wisconsin Outreach announces spring seminars in Milwaukee, Chicago, Miami, Philadelphia, Dallas & NYC. Topics incl. "Getting Published Successfully," "How to Succeed in the Film Industry," "Producing Ultra-Low & Low Budget Features" & "Making a Good Script Great." Fee: $165 for 2-day prgm. Contact: Robert Lewis (414) 227-3236 or Linda Smith, Communication Programs, UW-Milwaukee, 929 N. Sixth St., Milwaukee, WI 53203.

Bay Area Video Collective Spring Workshops. Topics incl. Casting, Control Track & Time Code Editing, CMX Editing, Basic Video Prod., Basic Lighting, Interviewing Tech., Basic Video Engineering, 1" Video Operations, Making & Repairing Cables, Intro to Amiga. Fees vary: $20 to $430. Contact: BAVC, 1111 17th St., San Francisco, CA 94107.

The Cutting Room Floor: Missing Scenes from Great Movies: readings by NY screenwriters of favorite scenes that never made it to the screen. Mar. 10 at 8 PM, NY Society for Ethical Culture, 2 W. 64th St., NYC. Co-sponsored by Writers Guild of America, East. Part of West Side YMCA Center for the Arts' series "The Writer's Voice." 1/2 price tickets for AIVF members.

Media Training at Film/Video Arts: Prof. instruction in all areas of film & video prod. on beginning & intermediate levels, incl. 16mm film prod., 16mm film editing, video prod., video editing, screenwriting, directing, fundraising, prod. mgmt & intro to digital effects. Scholarships avail. for Blacks, Latinos, Asians & Native Amers residing in NYS. Contact: Media Training, F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9361.

Fast Rewind: The Archaeology of Moving Images, a 4-day int'l conference on moving image preservation & application. May 4-7 in Rochester, NY. Panels and presentations on preservation, research, teaching, exchanging, financing and sharing. Contact: Rochester Institute of Technology, College of Liberal Arts, Bruce Austin, William Kern Prof. in Communications, One Lomb Memorial Dr., Box 9887, Rochester, NY 14623-0887; (716) 475-6649.

American Film Institute Spring 1989 seminars in LA, NYC, DC, Minneapolis & SF. Topics incl. acting, screenwriting, business, computers. Contact: AFI, Public Service Programs, 2021 N. Western Ave., LA, CA 90027; (800) 999-4AFI.

Int'l Experimental Film Congress in Toronto will feature screenings, panels & presentations on avant-garde cinema. Programs incl. founding women of avant-garde, Hollis Framption retro, nat'l prgms from Canada, W. Germany, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Europe. May 28 - June 4. Contact: Jim Shedden, Int'l Experimental Film Congress, 2 Sussex Ave., Toronto ON M5S 1J5, Canada; (416) 978-7790/588-8940.

Cultural Council Foundation announces free consulting "clinics" for nonprofit arts groups in NYC. Staff specializes in areas such as fundraising, organizational dev., publicity, accounting & others. By appt only. Contact: Jenny Avery; (212) 473-5660.

## Films • Tapes Wanted

New England Foundation for the Arts is seeking 3/4" & VHS tapes & 16mm films for Spring 1989 "Mixed Signals" series to be aired on local cable TV channels. Fee $20/min., max length 58 min. Clearance of rights & tech suitability necessary. Deadline: Mar. 3, 1989. Submit films/tapes w/ SASE to: Mixed Signals, NEFA, 678 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139.

Independent's Collective Showcase seeks humorous shorts for video distribution. Send SASE to: ICSIF, Box 16069, Encino, CA, 91416; (818) 609-9882.

New Day Films, self-distribution cooperative for indies, seeks new members with recent social issue docs or progressive films for young people. Deadline: April. Write: Ralph Arlyck, 79 Raymond Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601.

Interactivity, a multi-disciplinary arts fest, seeks VHS & 3/4" tapes for possible screening. Deadline: Mar. 1. Send tapes with SASE to: Interactivity, Madison Art Center, 211 State St., Madison, WI 53703.

Film Crash seeking films for regular NYC screenings of indie prods. Contact: Matthew Harrison (212) 673-3335, Karl Nussbaum (718) 636-5496, Scott Saunders (718) 643-6085, or write: Film Crash, 160 E. 3 St. #4G, New York, NY 10009.

## Opportunities • Gigs

San Francisco State University, cinema dept., seeks filmmakers & scholars as residents for fall '89 semester. Instructional position involves teaching 3 courses, salary & rank neg. Women & minorities encouraged. Send letter of interest, resumé & support materials incl. work sample to: Bill Nichols, Dept. of Cinema, San Francisco State Univ., 1600 Holloway Ave., San Francisco, CA 94132. Deadline: Mar. 15.

Anthropology Film Center in Santa Fe, NM seeks students for 2-part, 9-month intensive doc. prog. featuring hands-on training & cross-cultural communication. Max 20 students have access to 16mm prod. units. For Fall '89 info contact: Admissions, Documentary Film Program, Box 493, Santa Fe, NM 87540-0493; (505) 983-4127. Temple Univ. affiliated MFA prgm contact: Richard Chalfen, Dept. of Anthropology, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA 19122.

Programmer: At Collective for Living Cinema. Collective screens films & videos 7 days/wk, 52 wks/yr. Applicant must have 2-5 yrs. experience in film/video programming. EOE. Deadline: Mar. 31. Apply in writing (no phone calls) by sending cover letter, resumé, 1 month's prgm & 3 letters of reference to: Search Committee, Collective for Living Cinema, 41 White St., New York, NY 10013.

Video/Film Artist sought by Visual Arts Dept., UC San Diego for tenure track position beg. Fall '89. Exhibition & college teaching exp., MFA or equiv. required. Rank & sal. neg. Deadline: April 15. Write: David Antin, Visual Arts (B-027), Univ. of Cal. San Diego, La Jolla, CA 92093. Include letter, curriculum vitae, 3 refs & sample of work w/ SASE. Incl. ref. # 21071 on all mail.

Assistant Professor of media arts wanted. Tenure track, beg. Sept. '89. Teaching experience & prof. prod. experience, terminal degree or equiv. required. Sal. competitive. Deadline: Mar. 25. Send c.v., work sample, statements regarding work/educ. philosophy, 3 refs, SASE to: Larry Travis, Dept. of Art, Box 19089, Univ. of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, TX 76019. Women & minorities encouraged.

Legacy Int'l Youth Program seeks videographers, instructors, editors for summer positions June 18 - Aug. 18. Intercultural prgm deals w/ youth & adults in foothills of Blue Ridge Mtns. Non-smokers only. Contact: Marlene Ginsberg, Route 4, Box 265, Bedford, VA 24523; (703) 297-5982.

Channel L Working Group seeks student interns & volunteers to assist in prod. of cable TV programming for spring season, Jan.-May. Intensive training provided to all intern/volunteers in location camerawork, lighting, audio & portable video recorders. Positions for weekly, live call-in municipal talk shows, incl. producers, directors & asst. directors to be filled. Prod. experience also offered on special projects, e.g. docs, PSAs & training tapes. No previous prod. exp. required. Must be avail. at least 15 hrs/wk, primarily during days. Contact: Intern Supervisor, Channel L Working Group, 51 Chambers St., Rm. 532, New York, NY 10007; (212) 964-2960.

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## Publications

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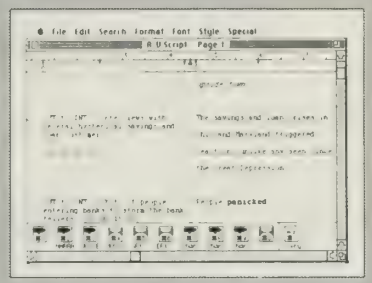
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COVER: Film still from *Up Your Legs Forever* (1970), by Yoko Ono. Yoko Ono's long career as an artist and filmmaker has always been overshadowed by her status as the wife, then widow, of John Lennon. Now, on the occasion of a retrospective of Ono's work at the Whitney Museum of American Art, Daryl Chin looks at her particular contributions to the avant garde. In "Walking on Thin Ice: The Films of Yoko Ono," he traces her roots in the Fluxus art movement and examines her feminist wit and challenges to the formal and thematic concerns of other avant-garde filmmakers of the period, such as Andy Warhol and Michael Snow. Courtesy Lenono Photo Archives.

FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY
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# THREAT OF SUNSET FUNDING LOOMS OVER BRITISH MEDIA GROUPS

Throughout the Thatcher years, Britain's nonprofit arts organizations have been hearing that the language of subsidy is out and that of generating revenue is in. Now, further changes in arts funding may be in the making, portended by several high-level reviews that were designed to examine the structure, rationale, and results of public arts funding.

"Money is getting very tight," explains Irene Whitehead, director of funding and development at the British Film Institute (BFI). "There's a feeling in government that the arts ought to do business like everyone else. It's happening in education; it's happening in health; it's happening in local government. I think the arts are being swept along in a political ideology."

This political climate, plus a variety of other factors—shrinking appropriations, new grant allocation guidelines for funders, personnel and structural changes at the BFI and the Arts Council of Great Britain, and, according to some sources, a desire to rein in organizations considered too liberal for the large institutional funders' taste—have all contributed to the timing of these reviews, which are scrutinizing both individual media organizations and the funding agencies themselves.

So far, one institutional fatality has resulted: the Society for Education in Film and Television (SEFT). For over 30 years SEFT acted as an information and service network for media teachers, organized conferences and seminars, and published a mail-order booklist and *Initiatives*, a small media education magazine targeted at teachers. In addition, SEFT was the publisher of *Screen*, an internationally prominent film and video journal which in the 1970s developed into a flagship for New Left cultural theory and politics. On the basis of recommendations by the consultants hired by the BFI to conduct the review, the BFI decided to wind up its support of SEFT, which was about £61,000—half of SEFT's total revenues and all of its grant aid. SEFT closed its doors on February 28 and *Screen* was handed over to a new owner, the Baird Center in Glasgow, Scotland.

"*Screen*'s future is safe," says its former editor, Mandy Merck, who was closely involved in the negotiations to keep *Screen* alive and have it affiliated with an academic instititution. The Baird Center is a film/television graduate studies center shared by the University of Glasgow and the University of Strathclyde. As of October, when the journal is scheduled to move to Scotland, its content will be overseen by a reconstituted editorial board, which will work closely with the new managing editor. The board will consist of the codirectors of the Baird Center, Simon Frith and John Caughie, and two other faculty members, Annette Kuhn and Norman King. There will also be a larger advisory board which, according to Frith, might include some of *Screen*'s past board members.

The report on SEFT was conducted by Comedia Consultants, a former left-of-center publishing group that went out of business several years ago and resurfaced as consultants. Their report on SEFT's management, administration, finance, and long-term vision is extremely critical. Some prob-




**The British film/video journal *Screen* will be under new ownership when it moves from London to Scotland this fall. *Screen*'s former publisher, the Society for Education in Film and Television, was forced to close its doors after the BFI withdrew funding.**

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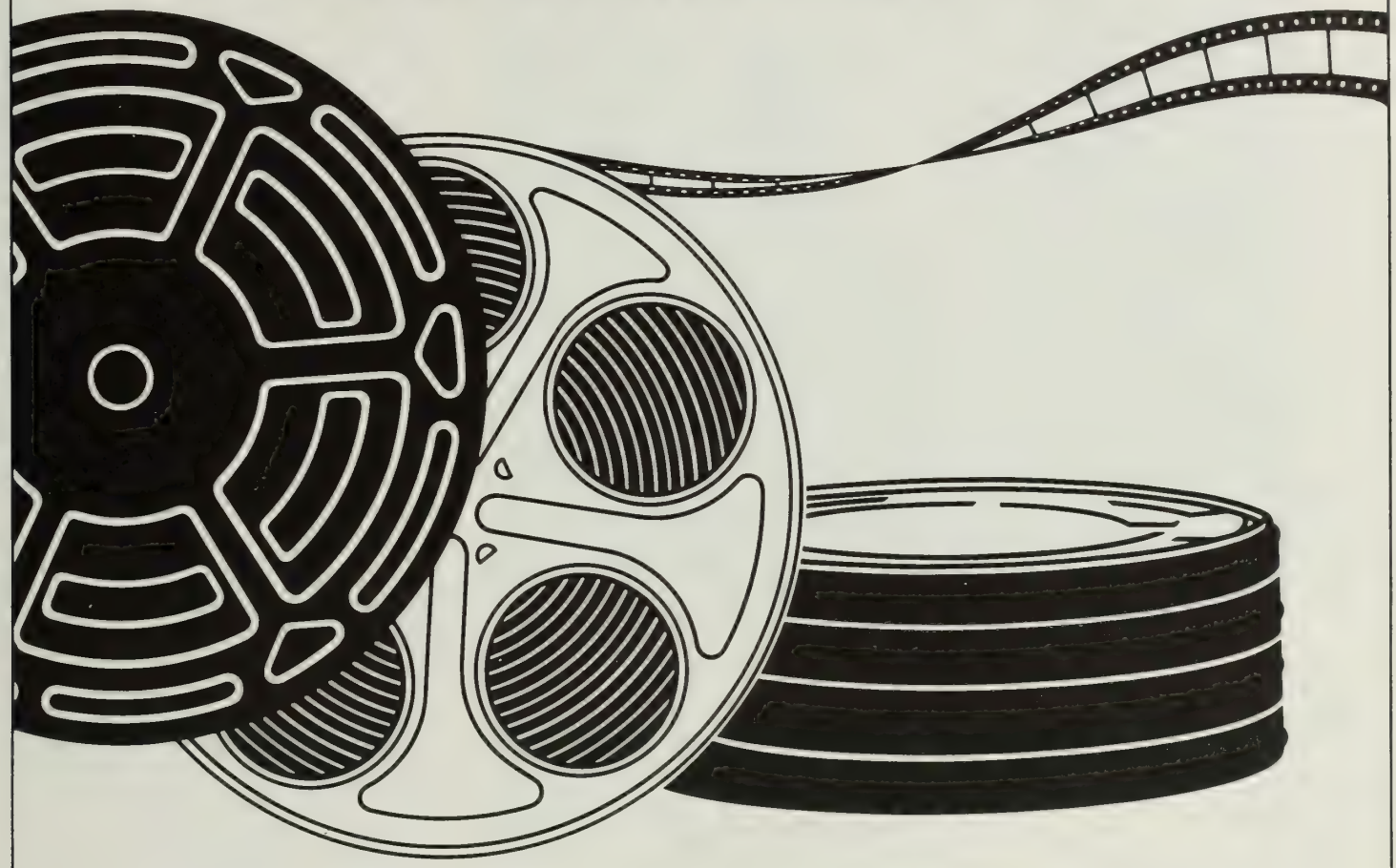
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lems it cites are unique to SEFT; others, the report states, "are by no means uncommon in organizations influenced and moulded by the ideologies of the post '68 era." Comedia identifies the tug-of-war between "high theorists" and "media educationalists" which has plagued the organization for years. This "institutional schizophrenia," according to the report, not only created public confusion about SEFT's purpose and sympathies, but also resulted in an internal stalemate. Lacking consensus about its direction, SEFT did not make the changes that were necessary, in Comedia's view, to move into the 1980s and accommodate itself to the Thatcher era—a recurrent theme in the report. While Comedia applauds SEFT's past achievements, such as playing "a major role in putting film studies on the map," it ultimately sees SEFT as a victim of its own success. The organization has not been able to meet the growing demands placed on it, Comedia argues, because it has failed to make the necessary transition from being "a voluntary body to one that is professionally managed."

But more detrimental than the criticisms of office and management practices is Comedia's position that by not accepting "the realities" of Britain under Thatcher, SEFT has outlived its usefulness. Comedia writes, "The Society's identity and ethos were classic products of the post '56/'68 political/cultural agendas. Crucially this meant a world view, which saw cultural politics as THE fundamental axis of social change... SEFT's sense of purpose and direction were inextricably linked to the wide political/governmental climate... [A] gradual process of disorientation [occurred] after '79/80, as that wider political landscape started to change—unravelling many of the assumptions and certainties that had marked the Society's zenith. Secondly, it involved a continued stress on a mode of libertarian activism which left SEFT badly placed in organizational terms for the demands of the 1980s." The report gives only brief mention to the problems that SEFT staff identified when talking to Comedia: shrinking grants, mixed messages from funders, government policies, an unfavorable exchange rate, and the executive board of directors.

What Comedia recommends as a more appropriate mode of behavior within the current climate is a greater emphasis on earned income and marketing. In the section "Beyond SEFT—a sketch of the future," Comedia outlines a plan for replacing SEFT with an organization that would be more conscious of its "social market," and would offer its services on a contractual basis. This form of "'service provision' enhances the organization's self-esteem, whereby it acts as a professional equal. (The funder as a client for services and the organization), rather than as supplicant."

BFI is moving ahead with another study that will analyze media teachers' needs and the best organizational alternative to SEFT. BFI will then provide seed money for this new organization. Some producers have speculated that BFI may have wanted SEFT closed in order to redirect its funds to BFI's Education Department. As Mark Nash, a producer and former *Screen* editor, observes, by funding SEFT, BFI "gave birth to its own competition." Whitehead replies, "BFI doesn't benefit from cuts. They are not to privilege the institution." SEFT's funds "will remain allocated for media education. They will not be dispersed over BFI's budget."

Two other reviews are currently underway which may have even wider implications for the media field. One, announced in December by Arts Minister Richard Luce and due in October 1989, is supposed to examine the structure of arts funding at the top of the chain—the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Regional Arts Associations, both important sources of funds for independent media. The BFI is also among the organizations that will fall under scrutiny.

Another study, commissioned by Greater London Arts (GLA) and due in mid-April, is focusing on the entire independent film and video sector in London. It is also being conducted by Comedia Consultants, together with Boyden Southwood Associates, a team formerly affiliated with Comedia. They are being asked to provide the GLA and the other major funding bodies in the steering group—BFI, London Borough Grants Scheme, Channel Four, and the Arts Council—with "an audit of work and equipment in the sector and strategic development plans or options" so that the funders can subsequently pinpoint redundancies in organizations' activities and devise an integrated strategy for funding film and video in London. As Whitehead speculates, "It's quite likely that the audit will come up with the recommendation that we should provide funds to a smaller number of groups than we are currently funding. So certain groups will fall by the wayside or merge with other groups or may be funded by another source." While Comedia Consultants have been characterized as "hatchet men" by many independent producers, they are listened to by funders—as the outcome of SEFT shows. Their critique of SEFT could well be a harbinger of the London sector report. Based on the signs evident at a meeting Comedia/Boyden Southwood held last January with independents in preparation for this study, they have not modified their belief that all leftist organizations are managerially inept and must now look toward earned income and marketing savvy to survive.

Another review in progress, instigated by the BFI, is of the Independent Film, Video, Photography Association (IFVPA), a national membership organization which has received significant BFI support. According to Alison Butler, IFVPA's director, the BFI is allowing them to undertake a *self*-review. IFVPA is looking at their changing constituency and how they might restructure to better serve independents—and to survive into the 1990s. "If they come up with a sensible scheme," says Whitehead, "they will be getting £32,000 in the next financial year"—a sum which

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is on par with past annual amounts. "This will continue one year, then, the BFI has asked the organization to look for methods to generate more income, so they can reduce their reliance on subsidy." This incipient pattern of phasing out grant support has been graced with the ephemism "sunset funding."

The growing emphasis on earned income is largely due to government pressure, according to the funders, whose own revenues are at a standstill. BFI's budget, slated to increase three percent next fiscal year, lags well behind the seven percent inflation rate. In addition, the government is now requiring that BFI use a designated portion of its revenues as "incentive funds," with every pound from BFI matched by two pounds from the private sector or new income. Thus, according to Whitehead, BFI's shift in emphasis from ongoing organizational support to seed money, per-project support, and matching funds "isn't exactly a free choice." BFI has set certain priorities for its shrinking organizational grants. These include exhibition and the Black film and video organizations Black Audio Film Collective, Ceddo, Retake, Sankofa, and the Association of Black Workshops.

Several groups funded by the BFI, however, have encountered further difficulties when other funding sources drop out. For instance, last year BFI reluctantly withdrew its support of the Women's Film and Television Network after WFTN's other primary funding source, the London Borough Grants Scheme, terminated its £27,000 grant. WFTN was unable to find a replacement source and BFI was not willing to make up the difference, so the network folded. Similarly, organizational support from Channel Four is increasingly precarious. This has many of the Channel Four-funded workshops—including some of the Black film/video groups—worried about what BFI might do in the event of a workshop being disenfranchised by the television network. The government's recent White Paper on the broadcasting industry advocating its commercialization only adds to the problem [see "European Broadcasting: New Rules, Old Game" in "Media Clips," March 1989].

Will there come a time when revenue funding for media arts organizations ceases? In Whitehead's view, "It's hard for any arts funder to believe this could happen. We cannot function without subsidy, because you'd never be able to provide for innovation, for different voices. What you're going to get is the film/video equivalent of the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theater, but you're not going to get Sankofa and Ceddo." Whitehead says she is "optimistic" that this won't happen, but adds, "one can never be sure."

PATRICIA THOMSON

## WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

The public profile of a new addition to the ranks of distributors handling U.S. independent and foreign films, Zeitgeist Films, is beginning to take shape. The New York-based company is the brainchild of Nancy Gerstman and Emily Russo, who entered into partnership last November. The two have a combined experience of over 20 years in film distribution. Gerstman was director of theatrical sales at First Run Features for the past six years. Prior to that she booked films for the Landmark Theater chain and worked for the Short Film Showcase, an NEA distribution project administered by Foundation for Independent Video and Film. Russo spent two years as a theatrical booker at Interama, Inc., and previously worked as an associate producer on several low-budget independent films. To get their venture on its feet, Russo and Gerstman financed it out of their own pockets, with very little capital. They intend to compete with more established distributors by keeping their costs low. The staff, for instance, is composed of only the two partners.

Gerstman and Russo select their films through the usual routes—film festivals, screenings, word of mouth. While in existence less than half a year, Zeitgeist has already gathered an impressive roster of films. This includes Bruce Weber's documentary about boxing, *Broken Noses*, and *Let's Get Lost*, a portrait of jazz trumpeter Chet Baker,



**A new distributor of independent films, Zeitgeist, has opened shop with a roster that includes Tony Buba's feature *Lightning over Braddock: A Rust Bowl Fantasy*.**

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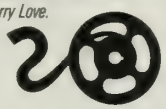
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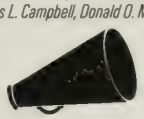
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by Weber and Nan Bush, which is one of this year's Academy Award nominees for Best Documentary Feature. Tony Buba's independent feature *Lightning over Braddock: A Rustbowl Fantasy* is also on their list. Employing a combination of documentary and experimental techniques, the film takes an unconventional look at a dying steelmill community. So far, Zeitgeist's only foreign film is *Egg*. By Dutch director Danniel Danniel, *Egg* tells the story of a town baker who courts a woman through the mail.

Zeitgeist also has a distribution arrangement with Apparatus Productions, a New York-based nonprofit independent production company and collective composed of filmmakers Todd Haynes, Barry Ellsworth, and Christine Vachon. In addition to producing work by these directors, Apparatus helps support other emerging filmmakers by providing production funds and script and budget consultations. Zeitgeist currently distributes three Apparatus films, most of which are narrative shorts. *Cause and Effect* is an experimental narrative of 11 minutes by Susan Dillon. *Muddy Hands* is a 24-minute work by director Evon Dunsky about a young boy haunted by the death of a friend. Julian Dillon's 32-minute *American Lunch* is about blackmail between two friends. In addition, Zeitgeist plans to distribute two other Apparatus films currently in production: *He Was Once*, by Mary Herstand, and *La Devina*, by Brooke Danmkohler.

While they will distribute some foreign films, Zeitgeist's partners are planning to place more emphasis on U.S. independent work—both shorts and features. At this point, according to Gerstman, they are "open to anything." Zeitgeist will be aiming at a diverse market, consisting of cinemas, schools, film societies, television, even galleries. They also have overseas rights for a majority of their films. Gerstman and Russo plan to distribute in a variety of formats, from half-inch to 35mm. *Let's Get Lost* and *Egg* are available in both 35mm and 16mm. All of the films can be rented on half- or three-quarter-inch video for classroom use.

For more information on Zeitgeist or their films, contact Emily Russo or Nancy Gerstman at (212) 727-1989.

LORNA JOHNSON

## BACK IN THE USSR

The Soviet Union recently opened its doors to foreign coproducers—the combined result of *glasnost* and the restructuring of the Soviet film studios' financing system. The Public Broadcasting Service series *American Playhouse* is taking full advantage and has already signed a deal to coproduce two films which will be released theatrically in the United States and USSR in 1990, followed by a broadcast on PBS. The scripts are currently in development for the films, which will be "true coproductions," according to an *American Playhouse* spokesperson, being bilingual, using actors and technical personnel from both countries, and focusing on U.S./Soviet relations.

Tom Cole, screenwriter of *Smooth Talk*, will cowrite and codirect *American Exhibition*, together with Soviet filmmaker Pavel Lungine. The $2-million dramatic feature will be based on Cole's experiences living in Moscow in 1959, where he was a Russian studies major and worked as a host for the American Exhibition, the site of Nixon and Kruschev's legendary "kitchen debate." The story will focus on the main character's romance with a Soviet woman. A new film cooperative, A.S.K. (American-Soviet Cinematography), will coproduce the film, which goes into production this year.

The second feature, *Odyssey*, will be coproduced by U.S. documentary filmmaker Lyn Goldfarb (*With Babies and Banners*) and her husband Anatoli Ilyashov, who wrote the short story on which the film is based and who is currently in the Soviet Union as a Fulbright lecturer. Their partner will be Kino Studio Krug, a division of Mosfilm, the largest of the USSR's studios. The director and scriptwriter will be American, with a Soviet writer contributing to the script. The $2.5-million film will be based on a story about disgruntled U.S. auto workers in the mid-1930s who move to the Soviet Union to start an auto factory funded by Henry Ford. The drama will focus on problems the families had adjusting to the changes in lifestyle.

PT

## RICHARD ROUD: 1929-1989

Richard Roud, director emeritus of the New York Film Festival and its former director, died of cardiac arrest in Nîmes, France, on January 15. Roud, a Boston native who lived in Paris, was the festival's first director and shaped its early direction. He continued to exert an important influence on the event for over 25 years.

Roud is widely credited with affecting the work of a generation of filmmakers by exposing them to his programming taste, which often favored new European cinema. He also helped to build a premiere event, and its prestige was recognized on the international festival circuit.

Beginning his career as a teacher and the London correspondent for *Cahiers du Cinéma*, he went on to work as a film critic for the *Manchester Guardian*. In 1959, he became the program director for the London Film Festival. Four years later, he was recruited along with Amos Vogel to structure the first New York Film Festival. He began as program director and chairman of the program committee. In 1970 he was named director, working also with the New Directors/New Films series cosponsored by the Museum of Modern Art and the Film Society of Lincoln Center, which sponsors the New York Film Festival. He remained the director until October 1987, when a controversial

split with the executive director and the president of the Film Society led to his dismissal. The termination incited a heated debate and led to the resignation of some of the film critics on the program committee.

Roud was also the author of a number of books on film, including *A Passion for Films*, on Cinématèque Français founder Henri Langlois, and *Straub*, his study of German director Jean-Marie Straub. Roud continued as a European consultant to the festival and at the time of his death was also working on an August series celebrating the French New Wave cinema for the Film Society.

KATHRYN BOWSER

## SEQUELS

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting has indicated that it intends to provide the $6-million earmarked by Congress for the new **Independent Production Service** and the additional $3-million for minority programming ["Victory for Independents: Congress Creates an Independent Production Service," "Media Clips," December 1988] by reducing the funds allocated for projects of its Program Fund. Specifically, CPB has drafted a budget that will diminish its Open Solicitations funding category by $3.3-million—50 percent. At present, this is the only CPB program that funds independent projects not sponsored by a station. Other sources CPB will use to make up the difference are its Station Independence Project and funds for the major PBS series, like *American Playhouse*, *WonderWorks*, and *Frontline* which be would decreased $1.6-million.

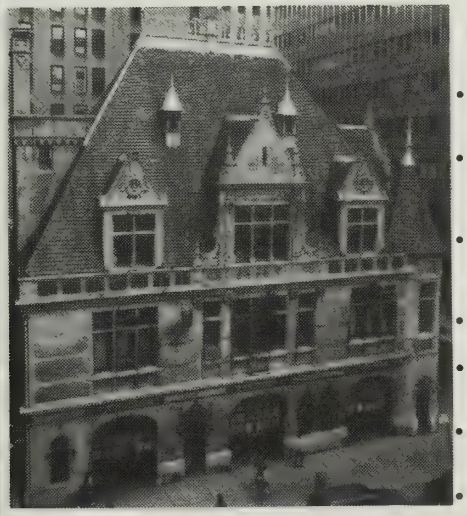
□ □ □

Now that the United States finally signed the **Berne Convention**, the international copyright treaty ["The Limits of Copyright: Moral Rights and the Berne Convention," May 1988], authors of intellectual and creative property will need to consider the implications of the European Economic Community's decision to lift some copyrights restrictions among member countries come 1992. That is the year when all economic barriers in the EEC will be entirely dismantled. The effect on film and video producers is contained in a recent "Green Paper," entitled "Television without Frontiers," which recommends that transmission of audiovisual properties within the EEC not be limited by national frontiers. Under this scheme, a broadcaster could obtain a license to air a program without the copyright holder's consent if, more than two years previously, the program had already been transmitted in one EEC country and no license had yet been granted in the broadcaster's country. An EEC commission would determine the amount of payment to the copyright holder for these rights.

□ □ □

Last year's Congressional battle that led to adoption of a modified version of the Berne Convention entailed lengthy and impassioned debates about a director's right to prevent colorization of her or his films. Although the treaty approved by the Senate deleted the provisions that protect an **artist's moral rights**—the relevant provision in the copyright convention—Congress decided to establish a National Film Preservation Board. The board is authorized to recommend up to 25 works per year to be included in a National Film Registry of "culturally significant" films. The members of the first Film Preservation Board are John Belton, Society of Cinema Studies; J. Nicholas Counter 3rd, Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers; William Everson, Department of Cinema Studies at New York University; Edward Fritts, National Association of Broadcasters; Gene Jankowski, American Film Institute; Fay Kanin, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences; David Kerr, National Society of Film Critics; George Kirgo, Writers Guild of America; Ben Levin, University Film and Video Association; Roddy McDowall, Screen Actors Guild; Franklin Schaffner, Directors Guild of America; Howard Suber, Department of Theater, Film, and Television at the University of California, Los Angeles; and Jack Valenti, Motion Picture Association of America.


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# SETTING THE STAGE FOR PUBLIC TV'S INDEPENDENT PRODUCTION SERVICE

Janice Drickey

When independent film- and videomakers gathered on a cold evening last January in an even colder lecture hall at the University of California, Los Angeles, to hear about public television's newly authorized Independent Production Service (IPS), a feeling of cautious jubilation swept along the participants and kept them talking about the project long into the night. The next day, in a ballroom of the elegant Registry Hotel in Universal City, the Television Press Critics Association also got an opportunity to learn about the IPS from Lawrence Sapadin and Lawrence Daressa, co-chairs of the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers.

The difference between the IPS and existing sources of funding for independent production within the public broadcasting system, the Coalition leaders emphasized, lies in the IPS' mandate to develop new programming that "involves creative risks and addresses the needs of unserved and underserved audiences." As a programming service rather than a fund, IPS will package, promote, and distribute works in addition to commissioning them, Sapadin and Daressa explained. While the independents and television critics welcomed the idea of the IPS as a fresh alternative to what broadcast historian Erik Barnouw dubbed the "splendidly safe" programming of the Public Broadcasting Service, the Los Angeles meetings gave both groups a chance to voice questions and concerns.

The public meeting of independent producers at UCLA—co-sponsored by the UCLA Film and Television Archives, the International Documentary Association, the Independent Feature Project/West, and Visual Communications—was the largest such gathering in Los Angeles in five years, according to Jeffrey Chester, a Los Angeles-based publicist and one of the key activists in the campaign for the creation of the IPS. As the evening began, UCLA television professor Kathryn Montgomery welcomed the independents, calling the IPS victory one of the most significant, positive changes in the broadcast industry in the last 15 years. Montgomery praised the Coalition's work, but warned independents that continued political action would be necessary to ensure that their victory would translate into lasting gains.

While gratified by the victory, the independent producers in the audience were quick to raise practical concerns: How would the IPS be staffed? Would the IPS provide matching or finishing funds? What would the make-up of its board of directors be? Independent filmmaker Marco Williams admitted he was more than a little anxious that, rather than functioning as a critique of the system, the IPS would instead be consumed by it. "Will the IPS simply imitate or duplicate CPB [the Corporation for Public Broadcasting]?" Williams wondered aloud. "How is it going to develop and maintain its identity, in terms of the objectives that it has? Right now we are very excited, but two or three years from now, will we be convening new meetings to find new money for independents?"

For Judith Guskin, an independent producer and recent transplant from the Chicago area, the answer to Williams' fears lay in the participation and involvement of independent producers themselves. "I'm very encouraged by the fact that we've had the victory, but I feel that it's very important to move ahead as positively as possible right now to try and bring in as many fresh new ideas from the field as possible, so that people in the field really feel a part of it." The Coalition's Daressa agreed, adding that the group would lobby vociferously to make sure that the IPS board was made up of people "with a commitment to new and different programming, not to corporate underwriting."

At the Television Press Critics Association meeting, the issue was raised in a slightly different form: Why shouldn't critics look upon the Coalition as the same kind of bureaucracy as CPB, intent on sending out its own message? Daressa explained that the goal of the IPS was not to impose a single voice, tone, or concept, but, for example, to "select a single topic—immigration, the health care crisis, the challenge facing ghetto youth, the sixties, the Colombian quincentenary, aging—and illuminate it from a variety of ethnic, regional, political, and artistic perspectives." Sapadin concurred, adding, "In a time of deregulation and concentration of media ownership that tends to shut out individual voices, the creation of an independent production service within public broadcasting is a breakthrough. We hope it helps restore an awareness of public broadcasting's mission, and that it is a bellwether of further successful efforts to increase diversity and innovation in the media."

One of the most frequently voiced concerns—both by independents and by the television critics—was that CPB would simply ignore the roots of the IPS, along with the needs that it was created to address. That, Daressa noted, was in danger of becoming an immediate problem. CPB, operating with a kind of revisionist imperative that prefers to forget about the bill's history, already considers the service their own creation to be dealt with as they see fit, Daressa said. He assured his audiences that the Coalition was not willing to take a back seat in the decision-making process that would determine the structure and operation of the IPS.

Participants at both meetings were also distrustful of the power and autonomy of the public television stations. Once the alternative programs were produced by the IPS, how could it guarantee that stations would show them? Sapadin responded, "It's one thing to say, 'Would you put $200,000 in it?' It's another thing to say, 'Here it is. Now are you going to run it?' We believe that the natural and inherent conservatism of these people will be overcome when they see the quality of the programs." Daressa admitted that public television stations who have fallen into the ratings mentality that justifies scheduling *Leave It to Beaver* reruns would prefer that the IPS "went away." But to counteract that, Daressa continued, additional funding for promotion and publicity were built into the IPS package. "We persuaded Congress to instruct CPB to provide us with the funds to back up our shows with national publicity campaigns more ambitious than anything the stations themselves could undertake for such 'marginal' programming," Daressa explained. "Innovative programming designed to build audiences, obviously, requires special packaging and promotion," he added. "We now have a program service which will take the time and money to do that." And if stations refuse to air the programming, in spite of the publicity? "Local viewers and press critics should ask why they are being denied access to this kind of programming," Daressa exhorted his audiences. "Congress could well ask why it should continue to subsidize a system which discriminates against programming diversity," he said. Jackie Kain, director of broadcasting at the Los Angeles public television station KCET stated that she could not speak for station management as a whole but that she was "waiting to see the programs, and I hope they're good," adding, "And I hope they take some chances."

There was general dismay among the independents over the amount of the funding for IPS—$6-

million each year for three years—less than the cost of most feature films. Bernard Nicholas, an independent producer who had been charting the progress of the IPS for some time, said that the meeting brought him a "revelation" about the effort. "If everyone starts concentrating on this six million dollars, instead of concentrating on all of PBS, which we have a right to be funded by, then [IPS] could well have become a bone thrown at us to distract us," he said. "It seems that it's not entirely cynical to expect that IPS could become the ghetto for the independent producers." Despite such concern, Nicholas said that he finds the possibilities inherent in an independent production service encouraging. "I have faith," he affirmed. "Because of the people who have been involved with it consistently, something good will come from it."

Suggestions about possible ways of distributing the funds were offered by the independents, as well as thoughts about criteria, such as a provision that shows be allowed to run "just as long as it takes," rather than limiting them to a half-hour or one hour. As one independent producer at UCLA wryly observed, "Nobody expects a book to be exactly 200 pages!" It was also suggested that the IPS avoid getting caught up in the matching funds game. "Give partial funding to filmmakers," one independent told the Coalition leaders, "but don't hold their project hostage." Another producer suggested that the IPS refuse offers of corporate support if the funder insists on exerting any influence or control over the work produced.

Before the Los Angeles meetings had drawn to a close, participants shared a sense of the urgency and expectancy surrounding the new program. In response to one independent who lamented, "By the time the structure gets going, the three years will be used up," producer Judith Guskin rose to her feet. "Let's not simply react to the CPB and the stations," she countered. "Let's move. Let's do it and do it well." Before she could sit down, the audience burst into applause, letting her know that they shared her zeal. Through hard work and perseverance on the part of the Coalition and its supporters, the independents and TV critics have been given what Daressa called "a chance and challenge to dream again." Judging from the sparks generated on that cold January night, the independents were ready—and more than willing—to take up that challenge.

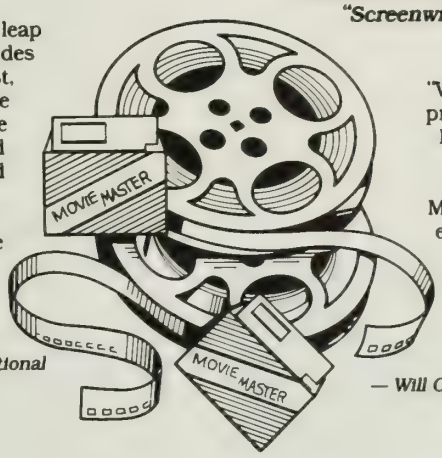
*Janice Drickey is a freelance writer who covers the film and television industry in Los Angeles.*


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# STEP BY STEP POSTPRODUCTION STRATEGIES

Bob Brodsky and
Toni Treadway

As the number of formats used in media production has increased, so has the complexity of postproduction. Until 1945, 35mm film dominated professional moving-image production. Now there are more than 20 formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 8mm, and more obscure film formats, two digital video formats, quad video, types C and B, U-matic, several half-inch, reel-to-reel formats, VHS, S-VHS, Betamax I and II, ED Beta, Betacam, MI, MII, 8mm video, and, soon, High Band 8mm video. With this variety, planning for postproduction can present formidable obstacles. Every mistake can consume time and, in many cases, money spent for unnecessary or useless technical services, so costs may easily get out of hand. Therefore, it is essential for every producer to take a step back from the exigencies of production and draft a master strategy for the next stage—postproduction.

There are two basic rules governed by the ultimate goal of a particular production and two routes to realize these goals. These guidelines have taken shape during the many years we've worked with producers who, in preparing for postproduction, have assembled their source materials and found themselves trying to sort out the advantages of the various formats available. Our recommendations also reflect our experiences with producers who, for a number of good reasons, want to use a variety of formats in making their work. Although there are other ways to obtain these goals, what we describe below is what proved to be direct and economical.

❑ ❑ ❑

**Rule 1:** If you want a *film* product or a *film and video* product, turn *everything* (including video and all audio) into *one film format*, either 16mm or 35mm.

**Route 1:** Strike dailies with printed-through edge coding, edit a workprint, transfer all audio to fullcoat of the same format, cut tracks with picture, mix audio to 35mm fullcoat and transfer to optical sound, have the original negative conformed to the workprint, strike a composite answer print, note density and color corrections and strike another one, approve it, if possible, and order an interpositive and/or internegative and from that strike distribution prints. Create, if needed, a one-inch video master—from a print is the cheapest, but from an internegative is higher quality. From a dubbing copy of the one-inch video master create preview and/or distribution dubs in desired formats.

The expense of this procedure is always significant. There are ways around certain of the steps, for example, mixing to 16mm fullcoat instead of 35mm, but the short-cuts haven't worked or worked well and have often resulted in even greater expenditures of both time and money.

❑ ❑ ❑

**Rule 2:** If you need *only a video product*, transfer *all* your materials into *the most highest quality videotape format you can afford, including all film materials*. Betacam presently offers the best quality-cost combination. If you have access to another high quality format for editing—such as D1, D2, one-inch, MII, MI, or three-quarter-inch with vertical interval head-switching—use it. We still maintain that S-VHS should not be used for mastering because head switching occurs in the vertical interval. While many broadcasters no longer object to visible head switching, some do. Until these broadcasters change their minds, you run the risk of technical rejection unless the picture is digitally enlarged (which can add expense beyond what you saved by originating in S-VHS rather than on a format with vertical interval head switching). Whatever format you use, you must have time code striped on all these materials. Use SMPTE non-drop frame time code.

**Route 2:** Have window dubs made from the master tapes. Have them made in a format you can most easily view. If this is VHS or video 8, fine. There is no substitute for viewing unedited material in the most convenient circumstances. If this format is not the same as that used by the off-line editing facility where you will make your work-tape, make a separate set of window dubs in that format. Store away the master tapes, standing them on edge in a plastic bag on a shelf in a room that's below 65 degrees Fahrenheit and 60 percent humidity most of the time. (Lower temperatures and humidity are recommended but most damage to magnetic oxide binders occurs above this temperature and humidity). As an extra measure of precaution against audio print-through and the annoying pre-echo, store the tapes tails out at their ends.

List each usable scene on a three-by-five card. Unlike film editors, you cannot place each daily scene on a core and take it off the shelf above the flatbed to try out a cut, but arranging the cards for trial paper edits will help you organize the trips through your window dubs. On the cards note: 1. a scene description, 2. the time code numbers of the first and last frames in the scene, and 3. characteristics of this particular take or moment, image, movement, and sound.

When the paper edit is satisfactory, assemble a work tape from the window dubs. Then make a dub of this work tape. You are now ready to make a second-generation edit. With one work tape in the player and the other in the recorder (it doesn't matter which one is where), preview tightened edits and rearrangements of scenes. Use the dual audio tracks to preview audio junctures and dissolves. Do not actually make the edits unless you are convinced that they constitute improvements. Then perform them. This new work tape will have a disjuncture at the end of your first edit. Edit in a bit of black from the beginning to the end of the disjuncture. You don't have to dub everything again just to tighten a few cuts throughout a piece. If, however, you are going to lengthen or insert additional material, then you will have to dub all the subsequent scenes anew. At times you may be discouraged with the composition of an entire section. Then you may want to return to the three-by-five cards to attempt to visualize more radical rearrangements of the material. If you do, you can also use the original window dubs to recreate the section and insert this newly edited material into the work tape.

Continue the above process until you have arrived at a final cut of image and rough audio. Then write down all the time code numbers for the first and last frame of every scene, including superimpositions, fades, dissolves, and special effects.

Now is the time to edit the on-line picture, accompanied by very rough audio. And this is also the time to use the best quality formats and procedures you can afford. If all your time code numbers are recorded on a computer disk that can be read by the on-line studio, you can increase your on-line edit efficiency at least three-fold. Virtually all on-line facilities run from computer instructions. When the your SMPTE numbers are properly fed to it from a prepared disk, the editing session moves along quickly. Check with your on-line facility to find out the cheapest way to get your numbers onto a disk their computer can read. Also, mark the first and last time code numbers for each cassette in broad pen on the label for that cassette so that they can be pulled quickly from a stack in the dim light of the editing suite and inserted into a player. When the on-line editing session is finished, you should have a time-coded complete picture master (and new continuous drop-frame time code) with rough audio and a three-quarter-inch window dub with both address

track time code and rough audio.

It's seldom possible to go into an on-line edit with audio completed (except with animation-style work, where picture is designed to match a completed soundtrack). It is usually less expensive to create the audio track, or at least fine tune it, after the picture edit is done (locked in). In recent years, the advent of low-cost multi-track audio recorders that will slave to time code has made it possible to create superior soundtracks for video. Take a three-quarter-inch time-coded copy of your finished picture and rough audio to a SMPTE audio house or to the audio section of your on-line studio. Here you will lay onto a multi-track audiotape the time code and rough audio. Next you will replace as much of the original audio (and voiceovers or narration) as needed in exact synchronization with the rough audio. This is not difficult since the three-quarter-inch cassette runs in sync with the multi-track recorder (the multi-track slaves itself to the the time code on the video cassette). Then you will add ambient (room tone) sound effects and, if desired, music. Finally, you will mix the separate audio tracks down to one or several tracks across the multi-track tape or onto a separate recorded locked in sync (using the same time code) with the multi-track.

Return to the on-line studio (or another studio) with a copy of the audio mix and the *time code* on an audio tape format which they can lock to the picture master. Picture and finished audio are married and a dubbing copy of the composite master from which your dubs will be struck is then made.

*Bob Brodsky and Toni Treadway are based in Somerville, Massachusetts, where they recently completed the third edition of their book* Super 8 in the Video Age.

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# THE PLUGGED-IN PRODUCER
# Budgeting and Scriptwriting Software

Debreh J. Gilbert

The informal survey I conducted in preparing to write this article—admittedly one whose standards fell short of a Harris poll—revealed four general approaches to computers among film- and videomakers:

1. The rare few who are completely fluent in computerese and able to coax amazing performances from software and modify over-the-counter products to suit their production needs.

2. A much greater number who are able to manipulate masses of data successfully by using abundant creativity and good sense. This group favors clone computers, which are usually less expensive than the name brands, and pirated software.

3. A variation on number two: buys software hoping to discover the ideal program for easing a multitude of tedious tasks, but leaves it on the shelf after realizing that mastering the software takes time.

4. Those who still write scripts on a typewriter, figure expenses on a pocket calculator, and keep receipts in paper bags.

Despite this range of attitudes and experiences encountered among media producers, none of those interviewed said they were opposed to a machine taking over the drudgery of their work. Robin Guardino, maker of the experimental short film *Crossing the Atlantic*, summed up the prevailing view: "In the pre-computer days I knew a lot of filmmakers who were wallpapering their apartments with scenes from scripts. And it was hell writing proposals on a typewriter."

Nonetheless several formidable obstacles discourage some independent film/videomakers. Besides money—computers and their accessories can involve a hefty investment—the complexity of much software can stymie the desire to harness computers for low-budget media projects. Some film/videomakers also complain that the available software isn't readily adaptable to the nature of their unconventional projects. The software that seems most popular among film/videomakers, then, is that which is most easily adapted and accompanied by on-going support for problem-solving from the manufacturer or distributor.

Software now exists for just about every facet of film/videomaking. This article will examine a few of the products available for preproduction needs, and only two areas within that already narrowed field: budgeting and scriptwriting. Not covered are programs either specifically designed or adaptable for casting, scheduling, bidding, and storyboarding. The film/videomakers I spoke to indicated that budgeting and scriptwriting software were those which most interested them. Scripting and budgeting are also the preproduction areas with the greatest range of software currently on the market. What follows is intended as an overview, not a definitive list of products or an endorsement of any program. Instead, a variety of popular or much-discussed software is reviewed with an eye to offering choices between functions, prices, and levels of performance.

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Budgeting is perhaps the most tedious task faced by film/video producers. Time-saving software that is easily comprehensible and capable of fulfilling most budgeting needs does exist. Unfortunately, it's not cheap and it may not suit many independent projects. But there are also some alternatives for those who don't mind making a little extra effort.

The best budgeting programs offer a number of features that allow the user to create formats for recording expenses (i.e., wages, supplies, insurance) as well as printing these forms or worksheets as office records. This kind of software must also calculate expenses: one figure changes and all related numbers are adjusted accordingly. For example, if your budget jumps from the low-low budget into the low-budget category established by the Screen Actors Guild, the rates paid actors in your project must increase. When the higher rate is entered, every entry related to wages will increase. Tracking, another prerequisite of budgeting programs, is a feature allowing you to pull expenses in a number of ways, i.e., coded by date or by the name of the job.

**Movie Magic Budgeting**, created by filmmaker Steve Greenfield and made by Screenplay Systems, is considered by many to be the most flexible budgeting program designed for film/video use. A "what if" key allows the user to compare budgets for up to 16 different scenarios. One can enter costs of shooting in Carson City, Nevada, say, and a separate budget for a Singapore shoot and then compare them by "toggling," or alternating, between the two displays. *Movie Magic* also offers a library, where recurring budget information—such as standard union wages or the cost of equipment rentals at your favorite rental house—can be stored in a glossary unattached to any particular budget. Any future budget can utilize this information with one keystroke. Other programs have a similar feature but limit use of such standard information to only one budget document. In contrast, *Movie Magic*'s library capacity is limited only by the size of your computer's memory.

"Magic keys," the program's system for setting up macro commands, allows the operator to program one key for a series of commonly-used functions, which minimizes the amount of time spent entering data or consulting manuals. For instance, if you frequently need to retrieve a list of all fringe benefits (pension, vacation, insurance, etc.), one key can be programmed to produce such a list. "*Movie Magic* is the best all-around budget program available. It is easy to customize, and you can easily avoid extraneous functions," says screenwriter and script "doctor" Doug Dempsey, who is co-chair of the New York Macintosh Users' Film/Video Special Interest Group and has demonstrated the program many times. A demo at Productions Systems, Screenplay Systems' New York City distributor, showed the software to be fairly easy to use and logical, although several users told me that customizing budget forms to fit their needs was harder than it seemed. No manual was available for browsing at Productions

Systems, and my sources said that the *Movie Magic* manual is too obscure for those who are only moderately conversant with computers.

Kelly Stanford, production office manager for music video producers Ken Walz Productions, has been using *Movie Magic* for two-and-a-half months and has only minor complaints. When trying to make her printout conform to the American Independent Commercial Producers (AICP) four-page standard bid forms, she discovered this to be an "arduous task." The difference between *Movie Magic*'s standard chronolgy of items and that required for the AICP's form necessitates a complete relisting of rows and columns and a new layout. She found the manual was no help, but in 10 minutes' time a friend was able to teach her how to accomplish the task.

Used by major studios like 20th Century Fox, *Movie Magic* can be equally functional for filmmakers with small budgets—if its $595 price tag isn't too staggering. The program may not useful for every kind of project, however. Joan Jubela, coproducer of the videotape *Bombs Aren't Cool* and director of *Crack Clouds over Hell's Kitchen*, allots certain amounts to budget categories—equipment, crew, etc.—working backwards from a fixed overall budget. Those who prefer this method may find many of *Movie Magic*'s features extraneous. Jubela, for instance, thinks that "it would be like using a sophisticated calculator."

For IBM PCs and compatible computers, *Movie Magic* requires 384K RAM (kilobytes of random access memory, which is, in lay terms, the computer's capacity to hold information; programs run faster and can be more powerful with more memory) and two disk drives or a hard disk. The printer must be able to perform with condensed or elite fonts. Macintosh computers require a minimum of 512K RAM, two drives or a hard disk, and Imagewriter, Laser Writer II, or compatible printing equipment. Sceenplay Systems provides a hotline five days per week to help users iron out problems as well as consult on ways to customize the program.

Black and Hispanic Images, an organization dedicated to the development of Black and Latino feature filmmaking, recently bought *Movie Magic*. Jaime Vazquez, daytime equipment manager at BHI, mastered the software in two hours. "The beauty of this program is that you go from script to breakdown to budget with the same information," says Vazquez. He selected *Movie Magic* after comparing it with *Budget Master* because he saw an advantage for beginners in the icon-displays possible with *Movie Magic* when used with BHI's Mac.

As Vazquez indicated, Comprehensive Video's **Budget Master** software is not available for Mac users. Written for IBM PCs and clones, this program features a handy automatic bold display for all items that run over budget. Like other budgeting programs, *Budget Master* allows the operator to track the same line items in the budget at different production sites. Although it comes with pre-designed forms, the user can easily modify them as well as create main budget sections. The forms contain space for as many as 600 entries, each with the capacity to track 150 expenses. And some users claim that the program runs faster than *Movie Magic*.

The toll-free hotline to iron out bugs and help beginners with *Budget Master* is open nine-and-a-half hours every weekday. In New York City, movie mavens may have already discovered a computer set up to run a *Budget Master* demo at Applause Cinema Books on West 67th Street. The program comes with a 30-day money-back guarantee. Priced at $395, the software requires 256K and either PC-DOS or MS-DOS (DOS stands for disk operating system).

Looking at a **MacToolkit Production Budgeter** screen, the program's three-tiered budget structure may seem confusing at first, but the form is logical and offers a complete presentation of information once it is understood. The lower half of the screen contains a detail section, where figures are itemized on "detail" lines—pay rates, hours, benefits, taxes for, say, a cameraperson. Amounts entered or altered at this level register automatically throughout the budget. Immediately above and occupying only one line on the screen is the category section. Here categories are broken down into units, i.e., a "cameraperson" unit. At this level the amount budgeted for and spent in this category is displayed. The top of the screen shows a top sheet, which gives a total figure for all underlying accounts. For example, when the cameraperson's account is being examined, the top sheet will summarize budget totals for the entire crew.

**Producers can modify *Budget Master*'s predesigned forms to match their own budget needs. The program, designed for computers using PC- and MS-DOS, allows you to define the major budget sections and sub-totals. It also has the capacity to track the same line items at different production sites.**

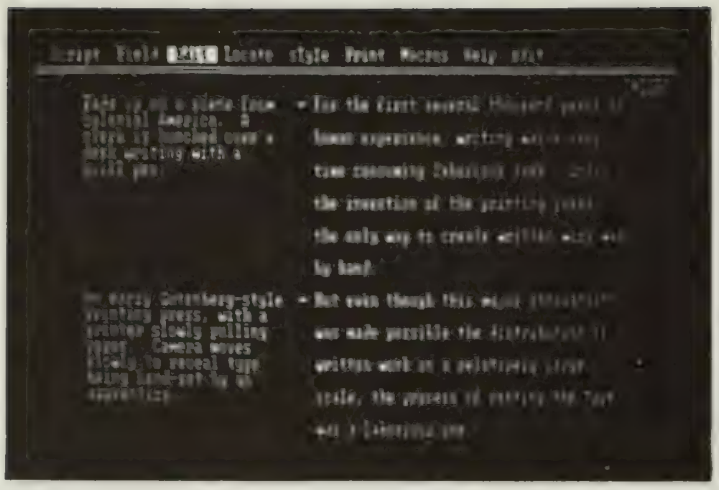



*Budgeter* claims an unlimited number of detail lines and all information is automatically saved unless the user executes a delete command. And it interfaces with Microsoft's *Excel*, a popular accounting or spreadsheet program based on rows and columns. Like *Movie Magic*, *MacToolkit Budgeter*, by Max 3, also offers a device that lets users compare cost differentials for different scenarios by employing a toggle key that suppresses the costs of one location while displaying the costs of another. More than one user has complained that *MacToolkit Budgeter* does not have an "undo" key, nor does it have the macros or library features available with *Movie Magic*. *MacToolkit Budgeter* costs $750 and comes in both Mac and PC formats.

Michael Lewin's **A Clean Slate** is yet another budgeting program, initially designed for budgeting and bidding AICP projects but potentially interesting to independents who want to use those standard industry forms. Lewin, cameraman and producer of commercial and industrial films, conceived *Clean Slate* as two separate programs—one to conform to Video Producers Association (VPA) bidding forms and another for AICP's—but has recently combined them into one piece of relatively simple software. Every *Clean Slate* screen highlights directions that walk the user through its system. Lewin has provided templates, or mini-glossaries, where information can be stored for repeated use—the crew section, for instance, contains standard union pay rates and graduated payroll taxes, and seven types of wages can be preset. Likewise, rental rates can also be stored and reused in the future. Setting up templates is fairly easy. Lewin designed a "utilities" menu that offers basic functions like copying, erasing, and renaming as well as "more options." This selection provides options for adding and coding templates as well as recalling already existing ones.

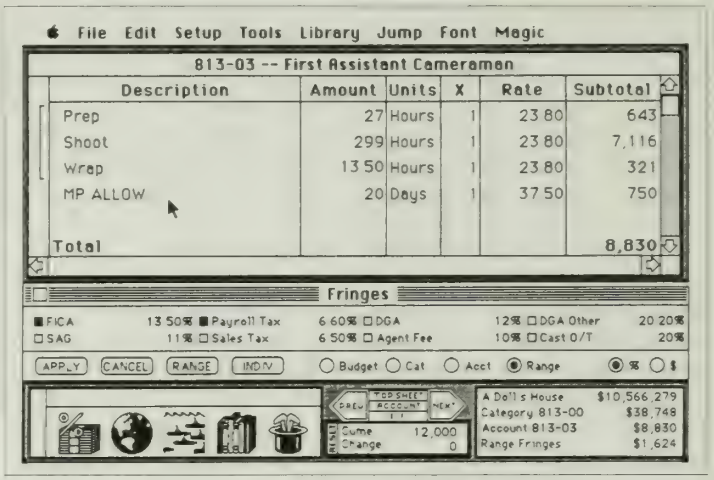
*Clean Slate* features save and abandon functions for "what if" scenarios, similar to those of *MacToolkit Budgeter* and *Movie Magic*. One can also compare estimated figures and actual expenses on the same page. Conversions of dollar amounts into six types of foreign currencies is possible, but, of course, these must be updated to reflect actual rates of exchange. Lewin provides complete technical back-up, either by telephone or in person.

Anyone familiar with AICP forms can immediately put *A Clean Slate* to use. Susan Seide, assistant producer at the commercial producing company Eye View Films, has been using the program for 14 months. "It uses language that's a lot simpler than many word-processing programs I've tried to learn," she explained. "I can revise a budget in 10 minutes and write an entire new one in 15." Are there any problems with the program? "A very minor one," says Seide. "It does cents, and big companies don't like to deal with that."



*Movie Magic Budgeting* is a flexible program that allows filmmakers to create and easily modify budget forms. Among its features, the program offers 300 lines of detail per account, instant recalculation, the means to build a customized ratebook with a library feature, and even allows calculations of fringe benefits for selected individuals, including separate cutoffs.

Designed for video and television scriptwriters using PCs, *Script Master* takes care of column alignments, margins, and format details. Like the film screenplay software from the same company, it offers an on-screen directory and up to 40 macro commands.




*A Clean Slate* sells for $795, works with IBM PCs and compatibles, and requires MC-DOS or PC-DOS 2.0 and 256K RAM. Lewin hopes to have a highly modifiable generic program for independents by mid-summer 1989.

"The biggest problem with programs written for movies is they are written by people only half in the know," Doug Dempsey believes. "Production ends up having to conform to software. Pages and pages of software notes are useless." Because many programs earmarked for film/video preproduction are expensive or have more functions than independents often need, generic software—accounting, database, and word-processing programs—are what some independent film/videomakers choose instead.

For his budgeting work, director, cameraman, and producer Stuart Math customized **V.P. Planning Plus**, a variation of the popular *Lotus 1,2,3*, which combines spreadsheets (columns and rows) with databases for IBM PCs and clones. Math, who adapted *V.P. Planning Plus* to bid and budget standardized 16mm film projects, says, "The problem is that a lot of prefigured programs have to take into account too many things. For example, I seldom have to pay SAG, but I have a lot of travel expenses."

Sheila McLaughlin, director of the independent feature *She Must Be Seeing Things*, uses **Excel**. The main problem with *Excel* is that it takes some time to learn. Still others, like Kathryn High, who produced the videotape *I Need Your Full Cooperation*, have successfully created simple budgets with the word-processing program **WordPerfect** (IBM PC, $395), which will automatically add number columns. **Microsoft Works** (Macintosh, $295; PCs, $195) includes an application for database management/spreadsheets with 57 built-in functions, such as automatic recalculation when a figure is changed and the ability to produce charts, making it also adaptable for budgeting.

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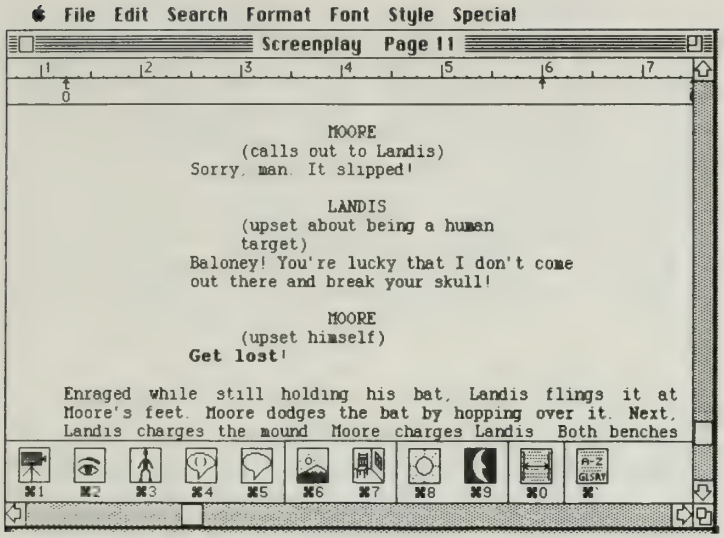
If a well-wrought budget can be imagined as the stomach of a film or videotape, the script is surely its heart. And, for many film/videomakers, scriptwriting becomes a heartache when creative work is slowed by hours of manually breaking down scripts or tracking props from scene to scene. The search for software that will never separate a character's name from her or his dialogue, add "more"s when dialogue carries over from one page to the next and "continued"s when a scene breaks at the bottom of a page might seem easy—as easy as finding a program that produces two-column audio-visual video and television scripts. But it ain't so. The programs designed for scriptwriting are much quirkier than those available for budgeting.

"My best advice for scriptwriters," says Doug Dempsey, whose credits include script consultant on the *Karate Kid* movies, "is to become well-versed in generics and stop trying to chase the perfect program." Indeed, a comparison of prepackaged scriptwriting software indicated major deficiencies. Learning and adapting popular word-processing programs like *WordPerfect* and **Microsoft Word** can be as easy as reading the manual and spending several hours with someone conversant with the program, according to film/videomakers who have done it. This method is greatly enhanced by an understanding of how to program macro keys—which sometimes requires additional software. Dempsey suggested that the trick is to keep the dialogue "locked together"—in other words, to instruct the word processor to not divide a block of dialogue text. In fact, he also designed a blank document in word-processing language, which sets up pages according to his desired script formats.

Stuart Math also favors word-processing programs for scriptwriting. After looking at several scripting programs, he decided to use his *WordPerfect* 5.0 software instead. Although he had some difficulty getting the program to handle the two-column format he needed for the parallel audio and video portions of television scripts, he solved the problem by setting up left and right margins and maneuvering checkerboard fashion down the page using macros to speed up the process. For instance, after he has typed text in the video column he hits a macro key that is programmed to carry the cursor to the next blank line in the audio column. There are no macro keys on the keyboard that comes with the Mac Plus or SE, but Macintosh users can buy an extended keyboard manufactured by Datadesk that has programmable function keys.

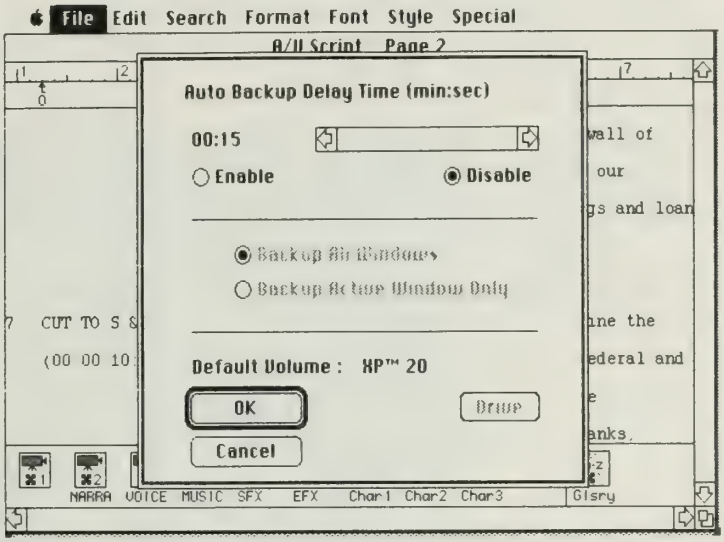
Although I conducted 20 odd interviews for this article, I found no one actually using **Cinewrite**, a French scriptwriting system by Parisoft, and a representative at Max 3, the U.S. distributor of the software, said that no demos were currently available. The following analysis is based on several accounts from film/videomakers who have tried the program or participated in demos. *Cinewrite* is a word-processing program specially adapted for scriptwriting and designed to be combined with storyboard frames. Several people who tried it found no use for this feature, because scriptwriters do not move between script and storyboard when writing. These same reviewers said that *Cinewrite* is not particularly attractive as a presentation device because several layout programs like *PageMaker* and *Quark* produce better looking material.

Outfitted with page and document formats that can be modified, *Cinewrite* produces standard film and television scripts. However, critics say the program is slow and uses too much memory. Its most serious drawback, though, is that the software's formatted script outlines cannot be easily separated from the text. In other words, these are read as one entity, which




**For Macintosh users *Scriptwriter* can be used to write letters, outlines, treatments, formatted screenplays (seen here), and dual-column scripts.**

**An additional feature offered by *Scriptwriter* is an automatic back-up onto a separate disk.**




makes it practically impossible to save only the format. This creates havoc if the user tries to create personalized formats, although the program is advertised as having this capability. Additionally, formatting a script while writing involves many keys and becomes a cumbersome process. The program will import text from other word-processing programs, both those used by Macintoshes and the PC family, but warnings abound about *Cinewrite*'s ability to accept some word-processed texts. The program costs $495.

Comprehensive Video offers two scriptwriting programs—**Script Master** for television and **Movie Master** for film. Both offer a basic range of word-processing functions, including an on-screen directory and 35 macro commands preprogrammed with the option to add five more. The script formatting section has exactly what other programs of this ilk offer: intelligent page breaks (not between a character name and dialogue), formats for breaking only at the end of a sentence, and pages that never end with scene heading. "More"s are placed under broken dialogue and character names are continued. Both programs also reformat after revisions are entered. Like other scriptwriting programs, the program will break down scenes and track props.

Some users say that *Movie Master* is more flexible than similar software and some of its features, like variable margin settings and customized page and type formats, are easy to execute. And the program has a reputation for running faster than other programs. Scripts written in *Microsoft Word* or *WordPerfect* can be imported and revised; scripts written in *Movie Master* and *Script Master* can likewise be exported.

*Script Master* handles the synchronization necessary for television when changes are made in either of the two columns without retyping. Both software systems support most printers and require IBM PC or compatibles with 512K RAM and DOS 2.0 or higher. Assistance for registered users is available by calling a toll-free number, which is open nine hours on weekdays. Comprehensive offers a standard 30-day money-back guarantee. *Movie Master* sells for $349; *Script Master* for $249.

**Scriptor**, by Screenplay Systems, appears to be a disappointment, compared to the company's excellent *Movie Magic Budgeting* and *Movie Magic Scheduling/Breakdown* programs. Although the introduction of a combo word-processor/formatter dubbed *Scriptor II* is promised, the current version merely formats scripts written in other applications. Some users say that the program does little that cannot be accomplished with good word-processing software, with the exception of intelligent page breaks and insertion of dialogue and character headers or footers used in standard scripts. The few unique functions *Scriptor* does offer are difficult and slow to use. To make matters worse, the program requires Macintosh users to write in the 1.05 version of *Microsoft Word* although 3.0 is the current and more versatile edition of that software. Mac owners must therefore convert *Word* 3.0 to *Word* 1.05 before importing files into *Scriptor*.

Another contingent of users, however, swear by *Scriptor*, pointing to its widespread use in Hollywood. They acclaim its ability to generate simple script reports and extras like storage glossaries where sections of dialogue and formats can be copied and stored for future use. Available for $295, *Scriptor* requires an IBM or compatible PC, 256K RAM, DOS 2.0 or higher, two floppies or a hard disc, and any printer. Mac users need a 512K or more powerful machine, two drives or a hard disc. For the first three months after purchase free updates are offered.

**Scriptwriter**, from American Intelliware, has gained a reputation among independent filmmakers during the last few years. Although I was unable to preview the program, several filmmakers offered me their opinions. Al Santana, director of *Voices of the Gods*, and Sheila McLaughlin said they are using *Scriptwriter* with their Macintosh computers. They both have older but different versions of the program and both are quirky. Santana, who is currently using the two-column format to write scripts for training tapes commissioned by the Port Authority of New York City, detailed several features he liked, including a built-in glossary, a function that allows him to find a page without flipping through previous ones, and automatic back-up on a separate disk. However, McLaughlin says that *Scriptwriter* is only an expensive—$495—word-processing program.

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Although **Tony Stewart's Home Office** provides neither budgeting nor scriptwriting, it is a gem for freelancers. Stewart, a former filmmaker who specialized in public relations films for colleges like Colgate and Skidmore, designed this extremely simple, straightforward accounting kit that combines checkbook and business ledger management. The program is written to perform three primary functions: tracking expenses, creating invoices, and maintaining a contact and mailing list. With one keystroke, users can retrieve an item from any of the categories—expenses, invoices, or the lists. For example, once a name is entered in the contact list, it can be pasted onto an invoice simply by typing the first few letters. Itemized expenses can be entered by category (57 predefined categories such as "travel" and "equipment rental" are built into the program and 300 more can be added), date, or project. Expenses can be called up and attached to an

**The main "Expense Module," from *Tony Stewart's Home Office*. This program can keep track of expenses by project, date, payment, and category.**

***Home Office*, designed for freelancers who bill time and expenses, allows you to create your own invoice formats and keep track of payments, jobs terms, and itemized expenses.**

```
                              *** EXPENSES ***
Amount   Date      Catg. Paym.  Description                    Job# Inv Pd

456.00  01/01/89  01   101     January Rent
 36.54  01/01/89  02   102     Gas & Electric -- January
374.00  01/02/89  V2   AMEX    Round-trip, Seattle            89001  C
 17.50  01/03/89  V1   Cash    Taxi to Airport                89001
 25.00  01/03/89  S2   Cash    Stamps
125.00  01/05/89  V3   Visa    Holiday Inn, Seattle           89001
 56.50  01/10/89  S2   105     Computer ribbons and paper     89001
 25.75  01/12/89  E1   105     Rangers tickets for Roger Smith 89001
 15.00  01/15/89  V2   Cash    Gas purchased on research trip 89001  A  *
 33.50  01/15/89  T1   110     New York Telephone
 14.00  01/16/89  R1   Cash    Book:  University Life         89001
 22.00  01/18/89  R1   Cash    Book:  College Life in America 89002
 56.00  01/19/89  T2   114     MCI Telecommunications
 55.00  01/22/89  E1   AMEX    Dinner w/M. Guthrie, Skidmore  89002
  6.55  01/24/89  A1   Cash    Xerox:  promo flyer

Sorted by DATE                                               15 Records
F1 Help  2 Add  3 Edit  4 Delete  5 Goto  6 List  7 Sort  <Esc> Exit
```

invoice by typing the appropriate code assigned to the category, date, or project. Once tagged with a code, itemized expenses will automatically reappear on an invoice. And, if the user remembers to enter items once a week or as they are incurred, the computer will sort expenses into precoded categories at tax time. Mark Weingartner, a production electrician and owner of a lighting and grip rental company, says he does not like to sound like "one of those unbelievable testimonials," but "I used to agonize at tax time over opening up paper bags and counting 50,000 receipts and figuring where to put them. Now I can just enter them and *Home Office* will figure out where they go."

*Home Office* exhibits flexibility in the same way a word-processing program streamlines the work of a typewriter, in so far as learning the ropes is not an arcane endeavor and what you see on the screen is basically what appears on the printed page. Devised for freelancers who bill time and expenses, the program's invoice format fits up to 10 lines of text, four lines for rate calculations (e.g., 7 hours @ $50 = $350), and unlimited itemized expenses. *Home Office* invoices can be categorized and personalized using 35 different options, from the client's name to a tax-exempt number.

A few gentle disclaimers prevail with this program. Those who use a black and white monitor will not find information about how to obtain a legible text on-screen at the front of the manual. Also, *Home Office* will not support the newer series of 24-pin printers. *Home Office* is not designed for businesses based on inventory, nor will it do automatic payroll. *Home Office* is geared toward billing. Those who want to maintain full financial books with deductions or general ledger accounting should use standard accounting software instead.

*Home Office* is available only for IBM PCs and clones and requires at least 512K memory, two disk drives (or hard disk). It costs $99 and comes with manual, tutorial, and a 30-day money-back guarantee. Stewart will give advice to users who call, and he updates the program regularly in response to users' suggestions.

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After having wandered through this variety of software options, Mark Twain's phrase "...all the modern inconveniences" comes to mind. It is clear that we live in a technologically uneven age. For example, some of this article was written with a pencil. Critical theorist Herbert Marcuse recommended that we learn to *use* machines and not be oppressed by them.

```
                    *** EDITING INVOICE NUMBER 89001A ***
                              Invoice Summary                    Style 1

Job Name:  Home Office                          Date:   01/16/89
                                                Job #:  89001
To:  Mr. Roger Smith                            Inv. #: 89001A
                                                Soc. Sec. # 000-00-0000
Skidmore College
100 University Lane                             Client P.O.:  54321
Saratoga Springs, NY  11111                     Client Job #
                                                Tax Exempt #: NYS 12345

Description:  For interviews and research to develop the
              approach and script for "Skidmore, Concurrence
              of Ideas"

Professional Fee:  $  2,500.00                  Sales Tax:  $      0.00
Itemized Expenses: $    465.00                 Please Pay: $  2,965.00
Expense Total:     $    465.00                 Balance Due: $ 2,965.00

F9 Previous Screen      F5 Change Style      F6 Tax Rates      F10 Save/Abandon
```

In *One Dimensional Man* he wrote, "Complete automation in the realm of necessity would open the dimension of free time as the one in which man's [*sic*] private and societal existence would constitute itself. This would be the historical transcendence toward a new civilization." In this same spirit, it is important to recognize the relative value of task- and time-saving machines. If they are too complicated for our needs, they can provide obstacles rather than freedom. But the first step is learning the machine's potential. The software considered here will make no significant dent in the course of world history, but some of it may make the work of film/videomakers less difficult and more satisfying.

I want to thank Joe Chin from Dou Chin Electronics Systems, who provided technical advice and reviewed programs for this article.

*Debreh J. Gilbert is a freelance writer who regularly contributes to* AsiaAm, Nikkei Art, ModelsWorld, Big Reds News, *and the* Village Voice.

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## Software Sources

**Scriptwriter**
American Intelliware, Box 6980, Torrance, CA 90504; (213) 533-4040

**A Clean Slate**
Michael Lewin, Box 57, Kew Gardens, NY 14415; (718) 849-9672

**Budget Master, Movie Master, Script Master**
Comprehensive Video Supply Corporation, Heidi Cohen, 148 Veterans Drive, Northvale, NJ 07047; (201) 767-7990, (800) 526-0242

**MacToolkit Production Budgeter, Cinewrite** (Parisoft)
Max 3, 3021 Airport Way, #112, Santa Monica, CA 90405; (213) 398-3771

**Movie Magic Budgeting, Scriptor**
Screenplay Systems, 150 E. Olive Ave., Ste 305, Burbank, CA 91502; (818) 843-6557

New York distributor: Production Systems, Dan Richter, 1133 Broadway, Suite 1428, New York, NY 10010; (212) 645-3140

**Tony Stewart's Home Office**
309 W. 109th St., 2E, New York, NY 10025; (212) 222-4332

# WALKING ON THIN ICE

## THE FILMS OF YOKO ONO



**Yoko Ono positions one of the subjects of her film *Bottoms* (1966), also known as *No. 4*.**

Photo: John D. Drysdale, courtesy Lenono Photo Archive

Daryl Chin

The key to Fluxus was that artists were killing individual egos. At least, that was how I interpreted it. But in New York artists have very big egos. I was never really antiart, but I was antiego. Postindustrial society will be a kind of egoless society is what I think. Many people now are giving up acquisitiveness in terms of money and material comfort; next stage is to give up acquisitiveness in fame. Of course, Fluxus people, including myself, are vain and do have ego, I know that. Is very, very hard.[1]

*—Nam June Paik*

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Although Yoko Ono is one of the most famous people in the world, she remains one of the least known. Aside from her status as the widow of John Lennon, little seems to be known about her work, her ideas, her art. But her variegated career is finally getting serious attention. That, coupled with the controversies surrounding her public persona, makes Ono a particularly apt subject for an inquiry into a number of issues relating to art and the shifts that have occurred in the the last two decades. The recent retrospective "Yoko Ono: Objects, Films," at the Whitney Museum of American Art, has provided the occasion for a reappraisal of Ono's art, but this reappraisal continues to be hounded by questions about her personal life and her artistic integrity barked by the mass media. The whole relation of Ono to the mass media is curious, because her films do not address the mass media directly. Rather, the aesthetic dialogue that her films engage in is that of avant-garde film.

Consider one of her most famous works, the film *No. 4* (1966). If you've ever heard anything about Ono's art, you've probably heard about *No. 4*, which consists of a series of close-ups of people's bare bottoms. There are, in fact, two versions of the film: a five-and-a-half minute version, which is included in the *Fluxfilm* program, the other an 80-minute version. Indeed, there may be other versions as well. In the 80-minute version, shots of 365 bare bottoms follow one another in rapid succession. The film is repetitive, with the image having very little depth of field. The film was shot with a camera attached to a treadmill: each subject would walk on the treadmill, while the movements of their bare bottoms were recorded. (The soundtrack consists of comments made while filming.)

An argument can be made that the perceptual nature of the film is enhanced by the lack of depth on screen: after a while, the image becomes less important, the shock value retreats, and the spectator starts to notice subtleties in the variations—as well as other aspects of the images, such as the film frame and even the screen surface. Paul Sharits (who also had a short film in the original *Fluxfilm* omnibus) once commented on Warhol's early films:

Andy Warhol has demonstrated in his early work that prolongations of subject (redundant, "non-motion" pictures), because they deflect attention finally to the material process of recording-projecting (e.g., to the succession of film frames, and by way of consciousness of film grain, scratches and dirt particles, to the sense of the flow of the celluloid strip)...is perhaps as revealing of the "nature of cinema" as is consistent interruption of 'normative' cinematic functions.[2]

In films like *Henry Geldzahler* (1964) and *The Thirteen Most Beautiful*



**In *Apotheosis* (1970, in collaboration with John Lennon) the camera follows the ascension and journey of a hot air balloon (carrying the filmmakers) from its preparations on the ground to its emergence above the clouds.**

Courtesy Lenono Photo Archive

*Women* (1964), there are simply "those close-ups where they did next to nothing," in Yvonne Rainer's description.[3] And so you become conscious of duration. The depletion of the subject matter makes the material conditions of the film process the actual subject, and an anti-illusionist attitude becomes the viewing vantage point. So it is with *No. 4*.

But for all the talk about the formal aspects of Ono's art, there's something else to discuss: her wit, and what it seems to mask. If Warhol focused his camera on faces, Ono (reversing his aims, both figuratively and literally) focused on anuses. And, of course, there is the obvious irony in terms of the sexual subtext of Warhol's work, specifically in such "portrait" films as *Eat* (1963) and *Blow Job* (1963). Just as, in his way, Warhol subverted certain canons of the avant-garde film, so Ono takes Warhol as a paradigm and subverts (one might say inverts) his work. (As P. Adams Sitney pointed out, *Sleep* was a literal inversion of the "trance films," which were a genre of the avant-garde film, exemplified by Maya Deren's *Meshes in the Afternoon* and Kenneth Anger's *Fireworks*, films depicting the dreams and the impressions of the unconscious of a sleeping protagonist. Instead of showing the unconscious of his character, Warhol simply showed the sleeping protagonist.[4]) There is, of course, the stinging irony: Whereas the faces in Warhol's films become his cinematic "objects of desire" (specifically in *Blow Job*, *The Thirteen Most Beautiful Women*, and *The Thirteen Most Beautiful Boys*, as those titles indicate), Ono presents a succession of anuses as an ironic comment on Warhol's strategy.

Writing on *No. 4*, Ono stated,

> In 50 years or so, which is like 10 centuries from now, people will look at the films of the 60s. They will probably comment on Ingmar Bergman as the meaningfully meaningful filmmaker, Jean-Luc Godard as the meaningfully meaningless, Antonioni as the meaninglessly meaningful, etc., etc. Then they would come to *No. 4* and see a sudden swarm of exposed bottoms, that these bottoms, in fact, belonged to people who represented the London scene. And I hope that they would see that the 60s was not only the age of achievement, but of laughter. This film, in fact, is like an aimless petition signed by people with their anuses. Next time we wish to make an appeal, we should send this film as the signature list.[5]

Although the whimsical tone is apparent, there is something else, something which is very close to rage, and that impacted emotion is often the occasion for Ono's particular social point of view.

A case in point is *Rape* (1969). In that film, a young woman is selected (seemingly at random) and followed by a film crew. The title is figurative: there is no actual, physical rape in the film. Rather, the title refers to the idea of the girl's privacy being invaded; this violation is the film's rape. The film is a record of the encounter, as the girl, a foreigner in London, is at first hesitant, then flattered, then bewildered, finally frightened and angry. In a way, the film is a demonstration of Warhol's dictum that in the future everyone will be famous for 15 minutes, although this film stretches it out to more than an hour. The film can also be read as an exploration of Ono's own recent experience after her recent marriage to John Lennon, which had thrust her into exactly that situation where the paparazzi from the tabloids had begun to hound her. *Rape*, then, can be seen as an act of revenge, turning the tables on the public that had started to infringe on her privacy. But, of course, it's an unfair act of revenge, because the particular woman chosen didn't do anything to warrant this intrusion. So the film is a joke, but a curiously sour one.

The same might be said of *Fly* (1970). The film consists of extreme close-ups of a fly (actually several flies) moving across a woman's body, accompanied by a vocal score by Ono. The music, which is highly expressive, provides a motivational narrative which the viewer can infer. But the film is problematic: The flies had to be chloroformed in order to ensure that they wouldn't escape, and their slow, hazy movements are the results of being drugged. Sure, they're only flies, but the idea of living things being "pressured" into performing links the film (conceptually) with *Rape*. This aspect of the work also points to the undercurrent of hostility behind Ono's whimsy. The flies aren't merely humiliated (as the woman in *Rape* is); they're destroyed. The final image of several flies gathered on the body is clearly parodic, meant to evoke the sinister images of Hitchcock's *The Birds*, but it's also sinister, considering how the flies got there.

*Rape* and *Fly* are films Ono directed in collaboration with Lennon. So, too, are *Apotheosis* (1970) and *Up Your Legs Forever* (1970). *Apotheosis* presents a situation, and derives its form and structure from that situation—Lennon and Ono in a balloon. The camera follows the trajectory as the balloon rises, and the movement of the camera is dictated by the movement of the balloon—from the mild hubbub of people surrounding the balloon as preparations begin to frames filled with the white of a cloud to the final image of the sky above the clouds. This last image was described by Jonas Mekas: "At that point, however, the balloon left the cloud, and suddenly the cloud landscape opened up like a huge poem, you could see the tops of the clouds, all beautifully enveloped by sun, stretching into infinity, as the balloon kept moving up above the soft woolly cloudscape."[6] *Apotheosis* is foremost a film about camera movement reminiscent of the work of Michael Snow, particularly *Wavelength* (1967) and ⟷ (1969). That is, the imagery of the film is limited to the field of vision defined by the mechanism of the film's making. In *Wavelength*, that field is defined by a continual



**In *Rape* (1969, in collaboration with John Lennon) Ono uses the camera as the aggressor, a situation that parallels the paparazzi's infringement of Ono's privacy.**

Courtesy Lenono Photo Archive

zoom. In *Apotheosis*, it's the view from the rising balloon.

For ⟷ and *La Region Centrale* (1972), Snow modified and customized camera mounting devices in order to get the camera movements he wanted. In ⟷ he controlled the panning of the camera on a tripod. In *La Region Centrale*, he combined a dolly and a crane that allowed continuous camera movement. Similarly, for *Up Your Legs Forever*, Ono needed a device that would pan up the different pairs of legs but would appear to be one long pan. She had the camera rigged so that every pan would be shot at the same speed. In *Up Your Legs Forever*, Ono performs at full stretch. The title is an obvious pun, playing on the phrase "up yours!" The repetitive nature of the imagery is grounded in the aesthetic ploys of duration, serial imagery, and stasis, which were such an important concerns of the art movements of the period. There is also a sexual agenda at work in the film having to do with the representations of women in the media. (As an example, Mary Tyler Moore's first significant job in television was playing Sam, the answering service worker in *Richard Diamond*, shown only from the waist down.) Ono often turns the tables on her audiences, teasing them with a bland antagonism. Just think of the titles of some of her films: *Rape*, *Up Your Legs Forever*, *Erection* (1970). Put these titles on one bill, and the impression is one of titillation. But it's a joke. The "rape" of the title is psychological, metaphoric. The "erection" of the title (a film credited as directed by Lennon, in collaboration with Ono) is the construction of a building. If a woman can be judged in sexist terms as "a piece of ass," Ono creates a film that consists of "pieces of ass."

What can't be ignored is Ono's anger, her barely disguised hostility and rage. I think there are any number of factors operative here, some of which are sociological and psychological; others are aesthetic and philosophical. In terms of the latter, this was part of the avant-garde sensibility of the late 1950s and the 1960s, which gave rise to such art movements as Pop Art, Minimal Art, Conceptual Art, and, of course, Fluxus. The dance reviewer Don McDonagh, using Yvonne Rainer's *Terrain* (1963) as an example, wrote, "It was blunt, honest, puzzling, at times wearisome and, most importantly, it was different. Different because it wanted to pose a direct challenge to custom and didn't have the time to be subtle or polite."[7] That direct challenge to custom was one of the characteristics of the art from that period. And the compressed, pressure-cooked, compacted atmosphere of risk, camaraderie, and rivalry was always present—so that, in 1967, Ono could say of *Wavelength* that it was one of her favorite movies of the year and go on to parody and to subvert its formal qualities in *Up Your Legs Forever*.

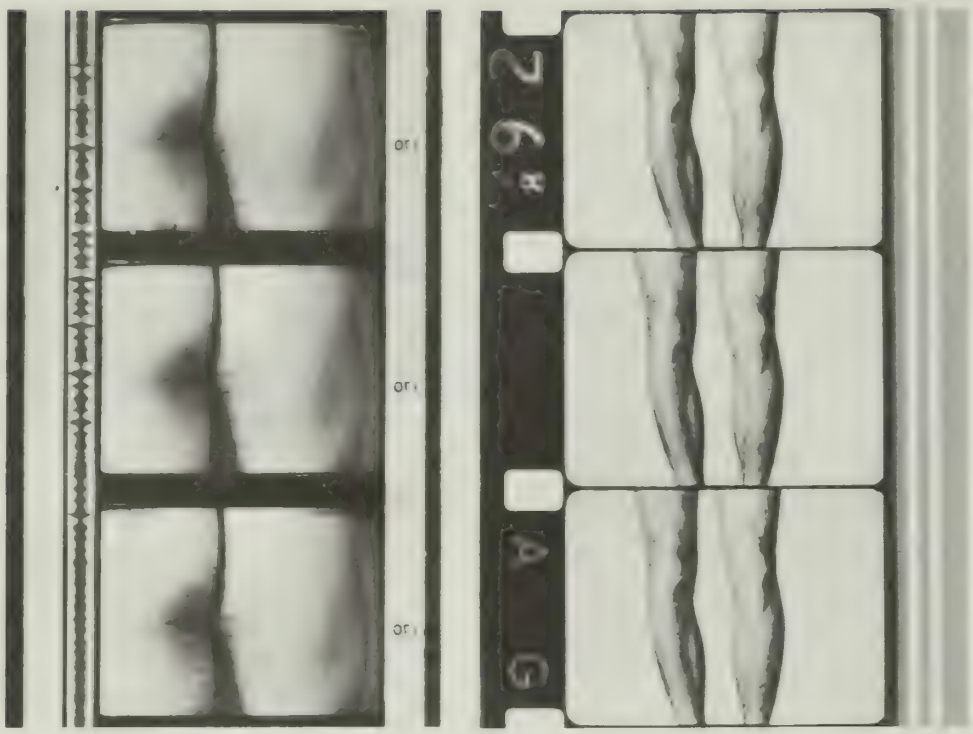
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But what if that challenge is ignored? What if a valid artistic challenge is defused by condescension or patronization? Let's take two examples: Carolee Schneemann's film *Fuses* (1967) and Simone Forti's 1961 dance concert *5 Dance Constructions and Some Other Things*. (These examples are not chosen by chance. In her essay "Happenings: An Art of Radical Juxtaposition," Susan Sontag listed 12 artists as among the primary creators of Happenings in the United States; Ono and Schneemann were the women in the list. Forti's concert was presented at Ono's loft as part of a series of alternative performances during the spring and summer of 1961.[8]) In the San Francisco Cinematheque's journal *Cinematograph*, David James discusses how *Fuses* challenged traditional aesthetic and political trajectories. In particular, he details Schneemann's use of the forms defined by the Expressionist-oriented aesthetic of Stan Brakhage to extend and question those forms from a woman's perspective. James notes what happened: "*Fuses* became invisible, marginalized within and by the marginal cinemas of the time."[9] In his book *The Rise and Fall and Rise of Modern Dance*, Don McDonagh wrote about Forti, "In 1961 she moved to New York and in that year offered one of the most influential single concerts ever given by a dancer."[10] Yvonne Rainer (one of the performers in the concert) remembers the effects somewhat differently:

> Before her "retirement" Simone did complete her own "opus." It was *An Evening of Dance Constructions* at Yoko Ono's loft on Chambers Street (May 1961) and proved to be way ahead of its time. I sometimes wonder if more feedback would have prevented her retirement. As things then stood, it was as though a vacuum sealed that event. Nothing was written about it and dancers went on dancing and painters and ex-painters went on making painterly happenings and theater pieces. It would take another two and a half years before the idea of a "construction" to generate movement or situation would take hold.[11]

The effects of that kind of silence can be devastating. This can be seen in terms of the lack of discussion that Ono's major films faced. I've tried to indicate how her films challenged the formal and the thematic concerns of avant-garde filmmakers from that period, in particular, Warhol and Snow (who were also visual artists-turned-filmmakers). Yet, aside from Jonas Mekas and the late David Bienstock, there was no serious comment on her films, on the sly, mordant, subtle way she skewed the avant-garde film to admit a specifically feminine wit. Remember, during this period (1966-71) Ono issued a statement that became notorious, "Woman is the nigger of the world." The conflation of racial and sexual politics to be found in that statement was (and still is, I think) shocking. Here is another statement by Ono, revealing her feminist attitude:

> I wonder why men can get serious at all. They have this delicate long thing hanging outside their bodies, which goes up and down of its own will. First of all having it outside your body is terribly dangerous. If I were a man I would have a fantastic



**Left: *Bottoms* (also known as *No. 4*).**

Courtesy Lenono Photo Archive

**Right: The camera's movement up different pairs of legs seems like one continuous pan in *Up Your Legs Forever* (1970, in collaboration with John Lennon).**

Courtesy Lenono Photo Archive

castration complex to the point that I wouldn't be able to do a thing. Second, the inconsistency of it, like carrying a chance time alarm or something. If I were a man I would always be laughing at myself. Humour is probably something the male of the species discovered through their own anatomy. But men are so serious. Why? Why violence? Why hatred? Why war? If people want to make war, they should make a colour war, and paint each other's city up during the night in pinks and greens. Men have an unusual talent for making a bore out of everything they touch. Art, painting, sculpture, like who wants a cast-iron woman, for instance.[12]

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This subversive attitude was not unique to Ono; it was an attitude common to many of the avant-garde artists of the time, especially those artists who participated in Fluxus. The period of the late 1950s and the sixties saw an veritable artistic onslaught, with many artists attempting to create works which would challenge and defy categorization. That's when Happenings, Events, things which people called Dance and Music that didn't seem like Dance or Music, or film screenings that turned into Expanded Cinema were produced and became notorious. In order to present these works, the usual categories of art spaces had to be flexible or redefined. That's why, during that period, there were a number of people whose art became a form of entrepreneurship, artists who organized concerts, exhibits, or performances, and numerous uncategorizable variations, e.g., concerts that became exhibits or exhibits that became performances. Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton, and Ruth Emerson went to the Judson Memorial Church and arranged dance concerts there, which became the Judson Dance Theater. Jonas Mekas kept moving his Filmmakers Cinematheque. Beginning with a concert meant to highlight a Stockhausen piece, Charlotte Moorman went on to organize the Annual Avant-Garde Festivals. Moorman's only serious rival as an artist-entrepreneur-organizer was, perhaps, the late George Macuinas, the acknowledged center (words like "leader" and "head" seem inappropriate to a man who once listed himself under the heading Action Against Cultural Imperialism) of Fluxus.

What was Fluxus? In the simplest terms, it was an art movement that stressed conceptually-based art. (One of the earlier Fluxus works, the 1963 publication *An Anthology*, edited by La Monte Young and Jackson Mac-Low, included an essay entitled "Concept Art," by Henry Flynt. I believe this was one of the first times "concept" or "conceptual" art was proposed.) Often characterized as "neo-Dada" in intention and achievement, Fluxus was influenced heavily by the work of Marcel Duchamp and John Cage. (If the Judson Dance Theater can be said to have developed out of a series of composition classes given by Robert Ellis Dunn, so the U.S. component of Fluxus formed at classes John Cage gave at the New School in the late 1950s.) Many Fluxus artists were "intermedia" artists (a term coined by Dick Higgins), combining music, writing, and graphic art with performance. Fluxus artworks favored readymades, chance operations, and multiples. There was also a heavy dose of what—for want of a better word—I would call "whimsy." Some examples of that "whimsy":

*Piano Piece for David Tudor #2*
Bring a bale of hay and a bucket of water onto the stage for a piano to eat and drink. The performer may then feed the piano or leave it to eat by itself. If the former, the piece is over after the piano has been fed. If the latter, it is over after the piano eats or decides not to.

—*La Monte Young*, October 1960

*Direction*
Arrange to observe a sign indicating direction of travel.
- travel in the indicated direction
- travel in another direction

—*George Brecht*

*Sun Piece*
Watch the sun until it becomes square.

—*Yoko Ono*, winter 1962

There is a "what if?" "why not?" "what the hell?" quality to a lot of Fluxus art, which can be attributed to the artists questioning the limits of art. What's art? What isn't? Ono once said that everyone could be artists, and everything could be art. There were Fluxus publications, Fluxus concerts, Fluxus films, Fluxus readymades, Fluxus multiples, Fluxus prints and graphics. Although Fluxus was very loose and very eclectic, gradually a profile emerged. In 1966, Macuinas drew a chart, "The Expanded Arts Diagram." (Macuinas was one of the first artists whose work consisted of lists, catalogues, and charts, a true postmodernist, although he'd probably hate that label.) On one end of the diagram were "Events/Neo-haiku Theater" (the Fluxus end) and the other "Happenings/Neo-Baroque Theater." In 1966, Ono described the distinction:

Event, to me, is not an assimilation of all the other arts as Happening seems to be, but an extrication from the various sensory perceptions. It is not "a get togetherness" as most happenings are, but a dealing with oneself. Also, it has no script as happenings do, though it has something that starts it moving—the closest word for it may be a "wish" or "hope."[13]

Fluxus was a very loose amalgamation of artists, truly international and multicultural in its make-up. As an example: in 1963, Macuinas (a Lithuanian immigrant then living in New York City) sent a memo to Fluxus

members or prospective members, i.e., artists whose works had been or might be distributed, exhibited, or performed in a Fluxus context. The list included George Brecht, Toshi Ichiyangi, Robert Filliou, Gyorgi Ligeti, Jackson MacLow, (Takehisa) Kosugi, Nordenstrøm, Ono, Benjamin Patterson, Nam June Paik, Robert Watts, Emmett Williams, La Monte Young, Dick Higgins, Allan Kaprow, Alfred Hansen, Claes Oldenburg, Richard Maxfield, and Stan Vanderbeek. In 1966, Macuinas called Fluxus a "collective"; the aforementioned *Fluxfilm* was made, with short segments by Brecht, Macuinas, Eric Andersen, Cheiko Shiomi, Watts, Albert Fine, Paul Sharits, Ono, John Cale, and Joe Jones; Peter Moore was the cinematographer for several of the films. It was in this context that Yoko Ono developed as an artist. In 1966, Ono went to London to participate in the Destruction in Art symposium. From that point, art history converges with the larger scope of cultural history.

Prior to the establishment of Fluxus, Macuinas had been the owner of the AG Gallery, one of the first (along with the Reuben Gallery and the Martha Jackson Gallery) to present performance works (usually called Happenings). In the milieu of the New York art world of the early sixties, the artists who had met in John Cage's classes—Higgins, Al Hansen, MacLow, Philip Corner, Brecht—linked up with Macuinas, who was interested in an international perspective. To this end, they set up Fluxus tours in Europe, and contact was established between artists in the U.S., Europe, and Japan. Among the European artists who were associated with Fluxus were Ben Vautier, Filliou, Milan Knizak, Daniel Spoerri, and Joseph Beuys. The Asian component of Fluxus included Paik, Shigeko Kubota, Kosugi, Shiomi, Ay-O, Yoshimasa Wada, Yasunao Tone, the group Hi-Red Center, and, of course, Ono.

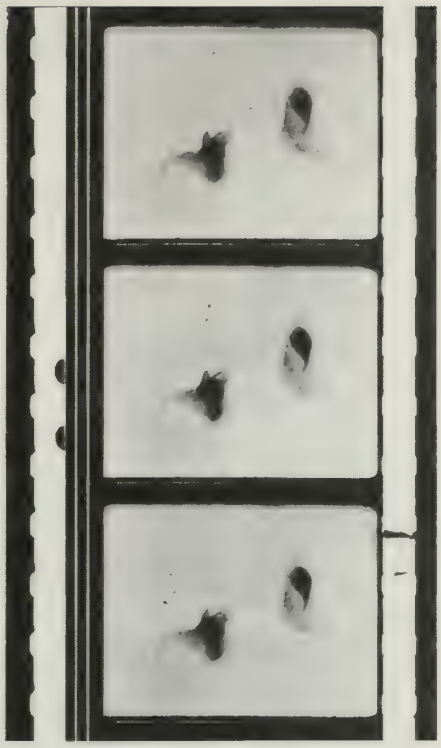
Like any subject tinged with nostalgia, this description may seem more idealistic that it was. Then, again, maybe not. About this same cultural moment, Rainer reflected,

> As I look back, what stands out for me—along with the inevitable undercurrents of petty jealousies and competitiveness—is the spirit of that time: a dare-devil willingness to 'try anything,' the arrogance of our certainty that we were breaking new ground, the exhilaration produced by the response of the incredibly partisan audiences....[14]

Perhaps appropriately, Ono has now recast her early Fluxus objects in bronze and justified this as an eighties response to a sixties aesthetic. There's some controversy about her revisionist strategy, but the films remain—without embellishments and without omissions—still challenging the predominant avant-garde aesthetic of the period and still providing an oddball feminist slant to some hoary aesthetic issues. One of my favorite pieces by Ono is *Sky Machine* (1967, not included in the Whitney show). It's a very elegant gumball machine, with plastic capsules inside, the kind that usually contain small "prizes," but, here, with nothing inside. Nothing, that is, except air—or, in the terms of the piece, "a piece of the sky." This could be a Duchampian ploy: the consciousness of demarcating a piece of the sky renders that piece of the sky part of a work of art. This could be a cynical commercial ploy: the artist saying that anything can be sold as art, even air. I think both meanings are within the parameters of the work, accounting for its particular humor and power. Ono's achievements as an artist (and her films, as with the films of Warhol, represent her art at its most impressive) show ingenuity, extreme irony, integrity, subversive wit, and a double-edged intelligence.

A section of my performance piece *The Future of an Illusionism* (1983) consists of a panel discussion on "alternative performance" since 1960. The panelists were Simone Forti, Alison Knowles, Charlotte Moorman, Carolee Schneemann, and Elaine Summers. At one point, Schneemann said, "Younger artists, who are struggling to find space and funding, are also all into marketing strategies. Or many of them are. They talk to me about being too sloppy and idealistic and having leftover attitudes from the '60s, because I haven't gotten together my networking."

In the February 7, 1989, issue of the *Village Voice* John Perreault quotes Ono's comment on her decision to show her art after more than a decade:



**The flies that appear in *Fly* (1970, in collaboration with John Lennon) move slowly across a woman's body, accompanied by Ono's vocal score. The flies had to be chloroformed to ensure a proper performance.**

Courtesy Lenono Photo Archive

For me it's moving forward. It's dispensing with that dream that my generation is carrying. We still have that inside of us. We can never forget that dream of revolution. We have that taste. In the future there will be an even more complex society. The '60s was one of the stepping-stones. But we can't look back.

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NOTES

1. Calvin Tomkins, *The Scene: Reports on Post-Modern Art* (New York: Viking Press, 1977), p. 207.
2. Paul Sharits, "Words Per Page," *Afterimage* (London), No. 4 (1972), p. 31.
3. Willoughby Sharp and Liza Bear, "The Performer as a Persona: An Interview with Yvonne Rainer," *Avalanche*, No. 5 (1972), p. 57.
4. P. Adams Sitney, *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 409.
5. Yoko Ono, *Grapefruit* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), p. 309.
6. Jonas Mekas, *Movie Journal: The Rise of a New American Cinema, 1959-1971* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), p. 412.
7. Don McDonagh, *The Complete Guide to Modern Dance* (New York: Doubleday, 1976), p. 447.
8. Susan Sontag, *Against Interpretation* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1966), p. 264.
9. David James, "Carolee Schneemann's *Fuses* (1964-67)," *Cinematograph*, No. 3 (1988), p. 38.
10. Don McDonagh, *The Rise and Fall and Rise of Modern Dance* (New York: Outerbridge and Dienstfrey, 1970), p. 190.
11. Yvonne Rainer, *Work 1961-73* (Halifax: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1974), p. 7.
12. Ono, *op. cit.*, p. 305-306.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 273.
14. Rainer, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
15. Daryl Chin, with Simone Forti, Alison Knowles, Charlotte Moorman, Carolee Schneemann, Elaine Summers, and Michael Kirby, "The Future of an Illusionism, Part II," *Heresies: A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics* , No. 17 (1984), p. 62.
16. John Perreault, "Age of Bronze: Yoko Ono at the Whitney," *Village Voice* (Feb. 7, 1989), p. 30.

# THEN AND NOW: THE SAN SEBASTIAN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL



**A retrospective of films by French director Jacques Tourneur made up one of the sidebars at this year's San Sebastian Film Festival. Tourneur is best known for his films from the forties, such as *I Walked with a Zombie*.**

Courtesy Museum of Modern Art Film Stills Archive

Jonathan Rosenbaum

Having attended the San Sebastian Film Festival on two separate occasions 16 years apart—in 1972 and 1988—I find it surprising how little the basic ambience of the event has changed. Apart from the fact the festival has grown, the major differences I noticed are those between Franco and post-Franco Spain. One no longer buys a copy of the *International Herald Tribune* on the Avenida de la Libertad only to find that a state censor has neatly clipped out an article or two from every copy. Even more noticeable, to the eyes as well as ears, is Basque, a language that was rigorously outlawed under Franco. One now sees it on street signs and hears it on TV. One of the many sidebars at the 36th International Film Festival at San Sebastian was even devoted to Basque films.

Sidebars, in fact, have for a long time been the festival's strength. In 1972, there was a Howard Hawks retrospective, with Hawks himself attending as a jury member for the films in competition. Back then, the festival was held in July, and was still small enough to offer excursions for all the guests: a bus ride to Pamplona to attend the bullfight encouraged Hawks to divulge some of his favorite Hemingway stories.

In contrast, the main selections at San Sebastian tend to be relatively mainstream and unexceptional. A few titles that I recall from 1972 are Sam Peckinpah's *Junior Bonner*, Carol Reed's *Follow Me* (his last film), Alastair Reid's *Something to Hide*, Tom Gries' *The Glass House*, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze's *L'homme au cerveau griffé*, and Peter Bogdanovich's *What's Up, Doc?* These selections were shown at the Victoria Eugenia, a large opera house that continues to show the films in competition and also houses the festival's offices, press room, video screening facilities (for the market), and a large café-restaurant. The Victoria Eugenia is located directly across from the Maria Cristina, the hotel which puts up the festival's VIPs and houses the press conferences (which are televised daily). Visitors who want to stick close to the main events tend to mill about the same large block and around the same plaza.

Some visitors, like myself, find reasons to stay away from the main events. To attend one of the evening galas usually means a bit more than just dressing up. It entails walking up a grand stairway under a line of crossed swords held by uniformed soldiers. If one decides to leave a film before it's over, there's no easy way of doing so unobtrusively. As I recall from 1972, the side exits tend to be locked, and one has to leave down the same grand stairway, flanked by the same soldiers and other evidences of festive pomp. Once outside, it is not unusual to be approached by children and asked for an autograph, regardless of who one is. Because of my memories of all this, as well as a strong interest in the sidebars, I stayed away from all of the galas in 1988. Various friends and colleagues, however, testified that this aspect of the festival remains largely the same. The festival has a substantial annual budget, and putting on a display for tourists is part of what the event is all about.

All three of the major sidebars in 1988 were exciting: a Jacques Tourneur retrospective (accompanied by the publication of a 250-page, large-format book on the director), a broad and multifaceted retrospective devoted to "The ABC of Latin American Cinema," and a novel series called "You Only Live Once," devoted to filmmakers who had made only one film—a varied, eclectic group that included, among many others, Marlon Brando (*One-Eyed Jacks*), Albert Finney (*Charlie Bubbles*), Jean Genet (*Chant d'amour*), Charles Laughton (*The Night of the Hunter*), Leonard Kastle (*The Honeymoon Killers*), André Malraux (*L'espoir*), Karl Malden (*Time Limit*), Lorenzo Llober (*Vida en sombras*), and Peter Lorre (*Der Verlorene*).

Jacques Tourneur, mainly known for his remarkable films made for producer Val Lewton in the forties (*Cat People, I Walked with a Zombie*, and *Leopard Man*) and his classic film noir *Out of the Past* (1947), was previously honored with a retrospective at the Edinburgh Film Festival in the 1970s and has long been a cult figure in France. In the U.S., though, he remains a neglected and barely known figure. The son of the very cultivated (and equally neglected) director Maurice Tourneur, who began and ended his career in France (1912-1914 and 1928-1948, respectively), but worked as



**From *Leopard Man*, by Jacques Tourneur. While Tourneur has a cult following in France, he remains largely unknown in the United States.**

Courtesy Museum of Modern Art Film Still Archives

a major Hollywood director for most of the teens and twenties, Jacques also worked on both sides of the Atlantic. (His first half-dozen films were made in France during the thirties.) Unlike his father, however, he did virtually all of his major work outside of France.

Known as the director who almost never turned down an assignment, Tourneur left behind a variable and uneven body of work, a surprising amount of which remains distinctive as well as personal. Ironically, for a filmmaker who habitually insisted on using on-screen lighting sources, he is deservedly known as a master of off-screen space. This trait comes to the fore in his Lewton films and the remarkable English horror film *Curse of the Demon/Night of the Demon* (1957), where the unseen becomes the "open, sesame" of the spectator's imagination, but it is equally pertinent in much of his other work.

His own personal favorite among his movies—a nostalgic small-town idyll with Joel McCrea, Ellen Drew, and Dean Stockwell called *Stars in My Crown*—was improbably made at MGM in 1950. A film that bids comparison with John Ford's *The Sun Shines Bright, Stars in My Crown* focuses on a local parson (McCrea) and his family, but has none of the religious piety that one associates with Louis B. Mayer's MGM. Tourneur rightly prided himself on his progressive treatment of Blacks in his films. One episode in the film that deals with the refusal of a poor local Black man (Juano Hernandez) to sell his property to well-to-do whites is especially striking for the wit and economy of its acting, scripting, lighting, and mise-en-scène.

Some of Tourneur's most interesting and visually striking pictures were adventure films in color: *The Flame and the Arrow*(1950), *Anne of the Indies*(1951), and *Way of a Gaucho*(1952) are three strong examples. The even more conventional and formulaic *Appointment in Honduras* (1953) is striking in the particularly Tourneur-esque way it is set mainly in exteriors while conveying the cozy atmosphere that one usually associates with interiors. Westerns such as *Canyon Passage*(1946) and *Witchita*(1955) are equally deserving of rediscovery. While Tourneur seldom seemed to have much of a hand in the scripts he directed, his best work conveys a finely tuned sense of ethics and a sensitive feeling for human interactions—both hallmarks of his direction. While the San Sebastian retrospective wasn't quite exhaustive, it did manage to include a few of Tourneur's TV films. A 30-minute show for *General Electric Theater* in 1960 entitled *The Martyr*, for example, offers a directorial feat of the first order: coaxing an unusually sensitive and subtle performance out of Ronald Reagan.

Of particular interest in the "ABC of Latin American Cinema" program were various films with considerable reputations but hardly known at all in the U.S. The best of these that I saw was a wonderful early black and white Cine Novo film by Ruy Guerra, *Os cafajestes*(1962), an erotic tale about two petty blackmailers packed with filmic invention and energy. Very close in look and spirit to the early films of the French New Wave which were being made around the same time, the film was popular in Paris when released. It seems like a historical accident that it never surfaced commercially in the U.S.

Others in the series that I saw or sampled included Raul Ruiz's first completed feature in Chile, *Tres tristes tigres*(1968), which intermittently demonstrates that his interest in "illogical" camera angles was there in his work from the beginning; an enjoyably lurid camp Mexican musical/melodrama, Alberto Gout's *Aventurera*(1949), starring the flamboyant Ninón Sevilla; and a revolting Argentinian exploitation cult item, Armando Bo's *Carne*, which principally consists of the buxom heroine being repeatedly raped.

All of the sidebar events were held in a cozy multiplex cinema in the old section of town, an area surrounded by relatively cheap restaurants and frequented mainly by students. Shortly before the end of the festival, after a Basque terrorist was killed in a skirmish with the local police, a burning bus was ignited in protest, blocking one of the nearby streets. A couple of miles away and a few hours later, at the festival's swank closing night party held at the Palacio de Miramar, San Sebastian glittered with a very different kind of light, sound, and fury.

*Jonathan Rosenbaum is the film critic for the* Chicago Reader. *His books include* Moving Places *and* Film: The Front Line 1983.


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# FILMS ON FAUNA: THE INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE FILM FESTIVAL



**The call of the wild is heard in *Ellesemere Land*, from the series *The Nature of Things*, produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. The film was shown at the International Wildlife Film Festival.**

Courtesy filmmakers

Emelia Seubert

Each April the University of Montana in Missoula is host to the International Wildlife Film Festival. The setting is appropriate, with five mountain ranges, home to grizzlies, elk, and eagles, all within view of the campus. In this part of the country, wildlife and land use are deeply felt and often divisive issues, covered almost daily in local media. The annual arrival of film- and videomakers who care about these same issues gives Missoulans an opportunity to reflect on their concerns and to celebrate the animal kingdom.

The festival attracts films and videotapes—and often the makers of the works—from all over the world. Now in its twelfth year, the festival is the brainchild of Charles Jonkel, a bear biologist at the university. His original goals in creating the festival were to encourage better cinematography and more accurate biological content in films about wildlife through public screenings, awards, and workshops. As the festival has grown it has added symposia and special events which bring together filmmakers, writers, photographers, biologists, conservationists, students, educators, and representatives of government from the U.S. and abroad. This produces a stimulating and sometimes heated atmosphere of exchange, where new creative linkages are formed and innovative ideas are born. Especially exciting is the festival's role in facilitating Native American and Native Canadian access to media technology.

Many workshops and presentations at the festival address the usual subjects of concern to filmmakers—marketing, distribution, etc. Specialized topics such as night filming and how to approach animals in the wild are also discussed. Others, however, depart from the mechanics of filmmaking to reflect Jonkel's understanding of media's intersection with society—as propaganda, as consciousness raiser, and, significantly, its promise as facilitator between groups with conflicting interests. In his view, film and video have a vital role to play in influencing policy-makers and the public about complex wildlife issues.

The screenings, held over seven days, range from widely seen, well-funded works produced by the likes of the British Broadcasting Corporation and National Geographic to productions by small independent companies, many based in the West, and student and amateur productions. However, as the crisis in wildlife and the environment has deepened, the festival's focus has shifted away from films targeted for affluent, English-speaking audiences of North America, northern Europe, New Zealand, and Australia, to a greater concern with indigenous and Third World peoples whose way of life is closely associated with animals and their habitats.

Jonkel is disturbed by the lack of media, and thus information, reaching mass audiences in lesser-developed nations. Equally disturbing is lack of access to media technology on the part of local cultures, which would assist them in communicating their values and views about the land and its animals. The past two festivals have been host to Native Canadian/Native American media symposia looking at possibilities for media uses by Native communities. Some workshops and seminars specifically encourage low-cost media technology as a viable option for indigenous peoples. Assailed by threats against their land and traditional hunting and fishing rights, film and video can assist Native people in their struggles. Among the communities that have taken up cameras are the Tlingit (*Haa Shagoon*), the Kwakiutl (*Box of Treasures*), and the Sioux (*Our Sacred Land*).

Salish Kootenai College, on the Flathead Indian Reservation only 50 miles from Missoula, has recently embraced the idea of a marriage of media and wildlife interests on the reservation. The tribe is actively conservationist, having taken the unusual step of setting aside a portion of reservation lands as a tribal wilderness area. For the past two years, the college has participated in the festival, and in 1988 hosted Native Canadian/Native American wildlife screenings. Salish Kootenai has been using media since it initiated a project in 1983 that documented traditional arts and made language and informational tapes for the tribe's use. The college now operates a low-power public television station which broadcasts PBS programming and six to eight hours of local programming every week.

Jonkel is also head of the Rocky Mountain Film Institute (a project of the nonprofit organization Institute of the Rockies) and is working with media center head Frank Tyro to create a Native American wildlife film school at the college. This program could provide a model for other Native American educational institutions to provide much needed media training to tribe members, at the same time encouraging young Indians to use their media skills in conjunction with wildlife and environmental issues. If Salish Kootenai's plans go through—it seems likely they will—the festival can take pride in its role as a catalyst for the new program.

The scale of the problems the International Wildlife Film Festival addresses are immense, which will not be resolved simply by airing the issues. But in doing so, the festival fosters a greater awareness of media's role and offers a vision of new directions producers might take to benefit both human communities and the Earth's remaining wildlife.

*Emelia Seubert is assistant curator at the Film and Video Center at the Museum of the American Indian in New York City.*

# IN BRIEF

This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the **FIVF Festival Bureau.** Listings do not constitute an endorsement & since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. If your experience differs from our account, please let us know so we can improve our reliability.

## Domestic

DORE SCHARY AWARDS. October, NY. 6th annual competition for undergrad & grad students majoring in filmmaking & TV who have completed film/video production on subject of human relations after Jan. 1, 1988. Entries must incl. supporting letter from faculty sponsor. Awards (both film & video): $1000 (1st); $500 (2nd); presented in Oct. ceremony in LA w/ travel & accommodations provided for 1st prize winners. Cats: narrative, animation, live action, documentary, experimental. Format: 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: June 15. Contact: Zirel Handler, Dore Schary Awards, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017; (212) 490-2525.

JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL: INDEPENDENT FILMMAKERS LOOKING AT OURSELVES. July, CA. Jewish themes articulated by independent filmmakers spotlighted in int'l showcase, now in 9th yr. Dramatic, documentary, experimental, animated shorts & features accepted. Program held at various sites in SF & Berkeley. Fest also published catalog of modern Jewish cinema w/ over 100 new films. No entry fee. Format: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Apr. 15. Contact: Deborah Kaufman/Janis Plotkin, Jewish Film Festival 2600 Tenth St., #102, Berkeley, CA 94710; (415) 548-0556.

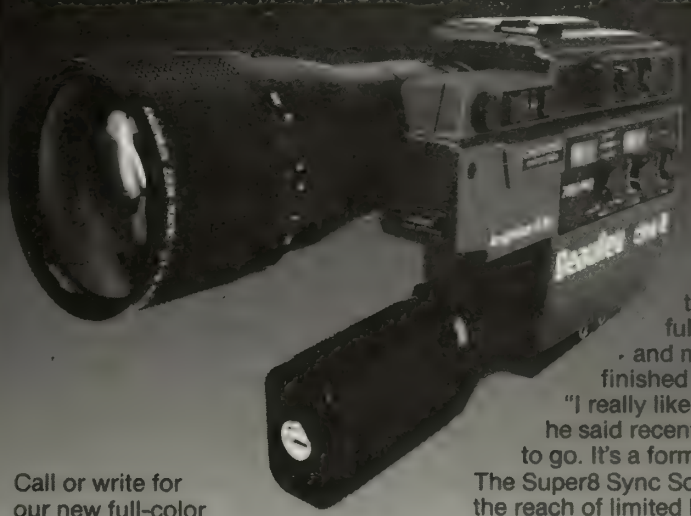
NEW JERSEY VIDEO AND FILM FESTIVAL. June 23, NJ. Celebrates achievements of NJ independent video & film producers, as well as works about NJ. Entries must have been completed between 1984 & 1989 & either produced by individual or group living or working in NJ, about NJ, or shot substantially in NJ. Fest now in 6th yr. Awards incl. cash, merchandise, or production services. Program to be held at Newark Symphony Hall & winning productions tour during fall & winter at various media, cultural & educ. centers throughout NJ & tri-state area as part of Festival Showcase Tour. Entry fee: $25. Formats: 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: May 1 (postmark). Contact: Newark MediaWorks, Box 1716, Dept. F5, Newark, NJ 07101; (201) 690-5474.

NISSAN FOCUS AWARDS. September, NY/CA. Now in 13th yr as largest national student filmmaking & screenwriting competition, competition exposes films & scripts of aspiring filmmakers & screenwriters to leading producers, directors, actors & agents. Feature-length screenplays & 16mm films produced noncommercially in conjunction w/ US educational institutions eligible. Over $100,000 in cash, cars & prizes awarded in 7 cats (narrative/live action; screenwriting; animated/experimental; sound achievement; film editing; documentary film; excellence in cinematography) & winners flown to LA for informal seminars & award ceremony. Nissan & Kodak principal sponsors, along w/ cosponsors Amblin Entertainment, Badham's Great American Picture Show, Universal Pictures, Dolby Laboratories, Benihana of Tokyo. Deadline: Apr. 28 (postmark). Contact: Sam Katz, FOCUS (Films of College & University Students), 10 E. 34th St., 6th fl., New York, NY 10016; (212) 779-0404; fax: (212) 779-1985.

VISIONS OF U.S., August, CA. 5th annual competition for video productions that express "vision of the world." Sponsored by Sony & administered by American Film Institute, competition accepts submissions in 4 cats: fiction, nonfiction, experimental & music video. 1 grand prize awarded, as well as a special Young Peoples Merit Award for entrants under 17 yrs. Judges incl. Laurie Anderson, Francis Coppola, Levar Burton, Quincy Jones, Shelley Duvall, Billy Crystal, Jeff Graham & Tina Yothers. Equipment prizes. Entries must be under 30 min. Format: Beta, VHS, 8mm video; submit on 1/2" or 8mm video. Deadline: May 1. Contact: Visions of U.S., Box 200, Hollywood, CA 90078; (213) 856-7622.

WINE COUNTRY FILM FESTIVAL. July 14-23, CA. Dedicated to independent films, fest showcases new films: ind. features, shorts, animation, docs, student feature films, works by new filmmakers & int'l work. Special sections: Films from Commitment, The Arts in Film & Planetary Series (conservation & environment). Program incl. tributes, special receptions, parties & wine tastings & special award given to "film company of the year." Formats: 35mm, 16mm; limited video screen-


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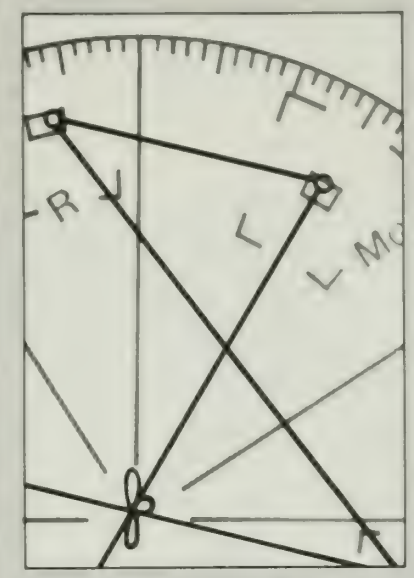
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ings. Entry fee: $15. Deadline: Apr. 30. Send info on films w/ 3/4" or 1/2" cassette for preview. Contact: Stephen Ashton, director, Wine Country Film Festival, Box 303, Glen Ellen, CA 95442; (707) 996-2536.

## Foreign

BARCELONA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL. July 4-12, Spain. Oldest fest in Spain, reorganized in 1987 w/ plans to become major European cultural force. Venue moved to heart of city & most prestigious blvd closed to traffic w/in 5 block area & several hotels taken over by fest. Large no. of filmmakers, writers & artists attended. Sections incl. competition, specially invited films, contemporary world cinema & homages. Top cash prize of $250,000 given to winning film in competition, but only Euro. films eligible. Short film competition accepts int'l entries. Spanish subtitling necessary. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: May 15. Contact: Barcelona International Film Festival, Passeig de Grácia 47, 3er. 2a., 08007 Barcelona, Spain; tel: (93) 2152424; telex: 99373 FESTB-E.

EDINBURGH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 12-27, Scotland. Noncompetitive innovative fest has presented short & feature length narrative & doc films for 43 yrs & always on lookout for "unusual & idiosyncratic" works, which incl. several US ind. films. Last yr over 200 films programmed. Entries must be cassette. Deadline: May 12. This yr fest has new codirectors: David Robinson, *London Times* film critic, and Polish filmmaker Krzysztof Zanussi. While fest now run separate from cinema center Filmhouse, write there for info: Edinburgh International Film Festival, Filmhouse, 88 Lothian Rd., Edinburgh EH3 9BZ, Scotland; tel: (031) 228-6382; telex: 72165.

GIJON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. July, Spain. Annual FIAPF-recognized competitive fest for films aimed at children & youth, which has expressed particular interest in entries produced by US ind. producers. Official section films accepted in & out of competition. Info section incl. 3 cats: Ourlines, Cycles, Retrospectives. Features (over 60 min.) & shorts accepted. Films in official section must not be awarded in other int'l fests. Awards: Principado de Asturias top prize to best feature & short; prizes also to best director, actress/actor; special jury prize. Jury of 200 young people (13-18) awards Youth Jury Prize to best short & feature. Format: 35mm; preview on cassette. Deadline: May 12. Contact: Roberto M. Berciano, Festival Internacional de Cine de Gijon, c/o General Vigón, 4, Apdo. Correos 76, 33206 Gijon, Spain; tel: (985) 341167/343739; telex: 87443 Ficg-e.

IN VISIBLE COLOURS: AN INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF COLOUR & THIRD WORLD WOMEN FILM/VIDEO FESTIVAL & SYMPOSIUM. Nov. 15-19, Canada. Recent films & videos directed, written, or produced by women of color & 3rd World women invited to participate in 1st major Canadian tribute of its kind. Fest plans to "showcase the vital & exciting work by women of diverse cultures & perspectives" along w/ accompanying forums & workshops covering prod., distrib., economic & aesthetic issues. Doc, narrative, experimental, animated works of all lengths accepted; artists fees paid. Cosponsored by Women in Focus & National Film Board of Canada. No entry fee. Deadline: May 30. Contact: Lorraine Chan/Zainub Verjee, festival coordinators, c/o National Film Board of Canada, 300-1045 Howe St., Vancouver, BC, Canada V6Z 2B1; (604) 666-3838; fax: (604) 666-1569.

JERUSALEM FILM FESTIVAL, June 29-July 8, Israel. 6th annual noncompetitive fest for recent features, docs, shorts, animation, video art, restored classics, films of Jewish interest, 3rd world themes. Program also incl. retrospectives & tributes. Held at Jerusalem Film Centre. Last yr over 130 films scheduled, w/ 30 docs. Deadline: May 1. Contact: Debora Siegel, festival coordinator, Jerusalem Film Festival, Hebron Rd., Box 8561, Jerusalem 91083, Israel; tel: 972-2-724131; fax: 972-2-723076; telex: 26358 CANJR IL.

LA ROCHELLE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL. June 28-July 8, France. Noncompetitive art film fest, now in 17th yr, has 3 main sections: retrospectives devoted to work of past filmmakers, tributes to contemporary directors (w/ directors attending) & The World As It Is, containing int'l selection of current unreleased films. Over 100 films programmed. Contact: Jean-Loup Passek, 7, rue Gozlin, 75006 Paris, France; tel: (1) 46337948.

LOCARNO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Aug. 3-13, Switzerland. Now in 42nd yr, this all-features fest considers itself "smallest of the big festivals & the biggest of the small," w/ solid reputation for innovation & excellence as one of Switzerland's most important cultural events. Competition accepts 1st & 2nd fiction features by new directors & especially seeks new directors, low budget films, indies & *cinema d'auteur*. Open to films over 60 min. (no educ., scientific or ad films) completed in previous 12 mos. Films must be Swiss premieres & not prize winners at other int'l fests recognized by FIAPF. Preference given to world premieres & films not yet submitted to other major Euro int'l festivals. Prizes incl. Golden Leopard (grand prize) & City of Locarno Grand Prize (10,000 SF) to best film, Silver Leopard (2nd prize), Awards Committee Grand Prize & City of Locarno 2nd Prize (5,000 SF) to 2nd best film; Bronze Leopards & cash prizes to 3rd & 4th place winners; honorable mention & technical prizes; prize also goes to local distrib. willing to handle 1 of fest films on Swiss market. Many films receive int'l premiere here. Accepted works should be French-subtitled. Fest program also incl. out-of-competition screenings in open air Piazza Grande (6000 seats) as well as retrospection & info sections & market. Last yr over 150 films programmed, along w/ over 40 represented in the market, which attracted most Swiss distributors & 80% of exhibitors. In addition to large local audiences, several hundred int'l journalists attend along w/ over 1500 guests. Format: 35mm, 16mm.

Fest director David Streiff will work w/ FIVF's Festival Bureau this yr to make selections. Cassettes (3/4" & 1/2" only) will be collected at FIVF office, sent to Switzerland in group shipment & returned to NYC after screening. Handling fee: $15. For information & appl., contact Kathryn Bowser, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th Fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400. Deadline: May 12. In Switzerland: Festival deadline: May 31. Festival address: Festival Internazionale del Film Locarno, Via della Posta 6, CH-6600 Locarno, Switzerland; tel: 093-310232; fax: 093-317465; telex: 846565 FIFL.

MUNICH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, June 24-July 2, W. Germany. Firmly established as German venue for US ind. films, noncompetitive fest, now 7 yrs old, has reputation for large (over 100,000) enthusiastic audiences & exciting programming. More than 500 films premiered here. Nearly 100 films shown in int'l section, perspectives (1st & 2nd work of young directors), ind. film section, special screenings as well as children's section, short films & docs. Concurrent Film Exchange program organized to provide advice & info

to buyers & sellers, w/ film & video projection facilities offered free, along w/ seminars. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Contact: Ursula Rapp, Internationale Münchner Filmwochen GMBH/Filmfest München, Türkenstrasse 93, 8000 Munich 40, W. Germany; (089) 393011/12; telex: 5214674 IMF D.

ODENSE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, July 30-Aug. 5, Denmark. Deadline: May 15. 8th biennial competitive showcase, programs fairy tales & experimental/imaginative films (fest originally called Fairy Tale Film Festival & dedicated to memory & spirit of Odense-born Hans Christian Andersen) for children & adults. Live action or animated films up to 60 min. accepted. Last edition featured 50 films from 20 countries. Int'l jury awards 8 prizes: 1st prize (statuette & Dkr. 35,000); 2nd (statuette & Dkr. 15,000); 3rd (statuette & Dkr. 15,000); 4th-8th (statuettes). Children & Youth Jury Prizes: 1st (statuette & Dkr. 2,000); 2nd & 3rd (Dkr. 1,000). Participating films may be shown on Danish TV w/ normal fees paid. Program also incl. retros & Children's Film Workshop where Odense children instructed in animation techniques by foreign filmmakers. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4", 1/2" (PAL). Deadline: May 15. Contact: Claus Damgaard/Helle Nielsen, Odense International Film Festival, Vindegade 18, DK-5000 Odense C, Denmark; tel: (9) 131372, ext. 4294; fax: (9) 914318.

VENICE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 4-15, Italy. Venice now in 46th yr, fest is world's oldest & one of Europe's 3 most important, distinguished from others by lack of market. Sections: Venezia XLVI (main competition: about 20 feature films); noncompetitive sections Eventi Speciali (special event screenings); Settimana Internazionale della Critica (critics week for 1st & 2nd works); Venezia Notte (ex-Venice midnight screenings for films "of an intelligently spectacular nature"); Venezia Orizzonti (Venice Horizons: info section for films highlighting tendencies, currents & aspects of recent cinema); Venezia RiSguardi (retrospective) possibly Venezia TV. Films cannot have been publicly screened in Italy, released outside country of origin or shown in competition at other int'ly recognized exhibits. Entries must be subtitled in Italian. Competition awards: Golden Lion to best film; Grand Special Award; Silver Lion to best director; Volpi Cup to best actor/actress; 3 Oselle for outstanding prof. contributions. Deadline: June 30. Contact: Biennale di Venezia, Settore Cinema e Spettacolo Televisivo, San Marco, Ca'Giustinian 30124, Venice, Italy; tel: (041) 700311; telex: 410685 BLE-VE-I.

WELLINGTON FILM FESTIVAL, July, New Zealand. 18th edition of noncompetitive invitational fest for films that would otherwise not have ops to be seen in New Zealand. Generally programs work which has been shown at other recognized fests & is NZ premiere. Features & shorts accepted. All films receive certificate of participation. Fest works in tandem w/ Auckland Int'l Film Fest. Will make effort on request to act as liaison w/prospective buyers; local distributors & buyers see both fests as major annual force in NZ film scene. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Apr. 30. Contact: Bill Gosden, director, Wellington Film Festival, Box 9544, Courtenay Pl., Wellington, New Zealand; tel: 850-162; telex: NZ 30386 Filmcom.


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The Independent's **Classifieds** column includes all listings for "Buy • Rent • Sell," "Freelancers" & "Post-production" categories. It is restricted to members only. Each entry has a **250 character limit** & costs **$20 per issue.** Ads exceeding this length will be edited. Payment must be made at the time of submission. Anyone wishing to run a classified ad more than once must pay for each insertion & indicate the number of insertions on the submitted copy. Each classified ad must be typed, double-spaced & worded exactly as it should appear.

Deadlines for **Classifieds** will be respected. These are the 8th of each month, **two months** prior to the cover date, e.g., April 8 for the June issue. Make check or money order—no cash, please—payable to FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.

## Buy • Rent • Sell

ATTN PRODUCERS/DIRECTORS: Need funds for a film/video project? Subscribe to *Film & Video Investments*. We bring producers & financiers together. Details: *Film & Video Investments*, Box 17161, Dept. 101, Hattiesburg, MS 39402-7162.

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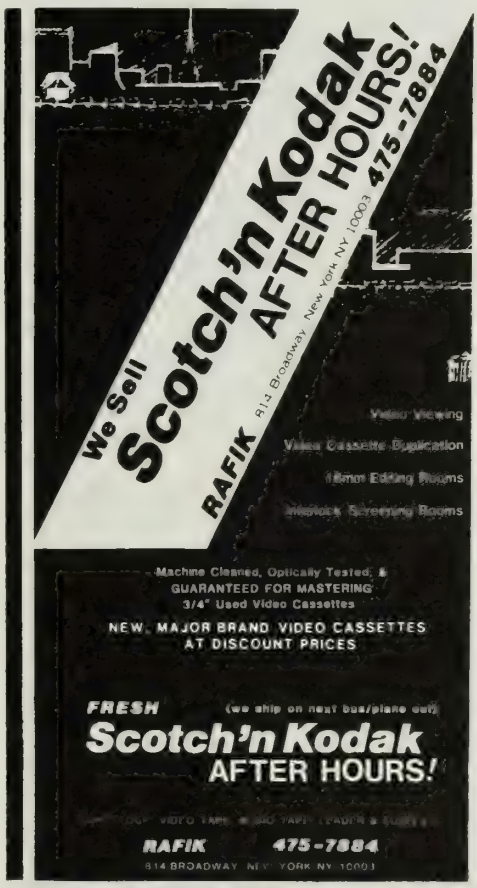
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**Notices** are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. **The Independent** reserves the right to edit for length.

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BOSTON FILM/VIDEO FOUNDATION workshops beginning in April. Topics incl. Animation, Basic Video, Corporate Scriptwriting, Holography Seminar, Time Code Editing, Writing & Selling for Film & TV, Intro to 3/4" Editing, 16mm Film Prod., Film-to-Tape Transfer, Actor's Workshop: Casting, Special Effects in Postprod., Story Structure Workshop, Developing Dramas for Interactive Video Disc. 10% discount for BF/VF members. Contact BF/VF, 1126 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540.

CENTER FOR NEW TELEVISION Workshops. Topics incl. Basic Video Prod., Videotape Editing, Advanced Postprod. Audio for Video & Computer Graphics Update. Contact Center for New TV, 912 S. Wabash, Chicago, IL 60605; (312) 427-5446.

3RD CHICAGO AREA INDEPENDENT FILM & VIDEO CONFERENCE, Apr. 22 at Chicago's Cultural Ctr., sponsored by Chicago Area Film & Video Network. Day-long conf. to focus on Independent Production Service, financing & distrib. of ind. projects, media arts in educ., & community-based video & formats. Preconf. reception on Apr. 21 & post-conf. brunch on Apr. 23. Contact: Carolyn Glassman, program coordinator, CAFVN, 1608 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647; (312) 227-1242.

COMPUTER GRAPHICS Carl Rosendahl, founder of Pacific Data Images, Sat., Apr. 1, 8 p.m. at Rich Auditorium, High Museum of Art, 1280 Peachtree St., NE, Atlanta, GA. Hosted by museum in collaboration w/ IMAGE Film & Video Ctr., Computer Studio & Georgia Chapter of Nat'l Computer Artists. Cost: $5, $4 students & srs., $3 High Museum & IMAGE members. Contact: IMAGE, 75 Bennett St., N.W., Ste. M-1, Atlanta, GA 30309; (404) 352-4225.

MAKING A GOOD SCRIPT GREAT: 2-day seminar on keys to successful scriptwriting led by Linda Seger & sponsored by Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Univ. Outreach. Participants learn to build story structure, ideas & characters while giving clarity to writing. Held in Philadelphia, Apr. 8-9 & Dallas, June 3-4. Fee: $165. Contact: University Outreach; (414) 227-3236.

NORTHWEST FILM & VIDEO CENTER: Intro to Animation class for middle & high school students, taught by Sharon Niemczyk & offered in cooperation w/ Saturday Academy. Sats. during Apr., 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. Tuition: $115. Contact: Northwest Film & Video Ctr., Oregon Art Institute, 1219 SW Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (503) 690-1190.

TRINITY SQUARE VIDEO WORKSHOPS. Topics incl. Intro to Portable Video Prod., Intro to Video Editing, Mixing & Mastering, Scriptwriting. Also Activism & Activism in Latin America seminars. Contact: Trinity Square Video, 172 John St., 4th fl., Toronto, Ont., Canada, M5T 1X5; (512)593-1332.

MEDIA TRAINING AT FILM/VIDEO ARTS: Prof. instruction in all areas of film & video prod. on beginning & intermediate levels, incl. 16mm film prod., 16mm film editing, video prod., video editing, screenwriting, directing, fundraising, prod. mgmt & intro to digital effects. Scholarships avail. for Blacks, Latinos, Asians & Native Americans residing in NYS. Contact: Media Training, F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9361.

FAST REWIND: ARCHAEOLOGY OF MOVING IMAGES, a 4-day int'l conference on moving image preservation & application. May 4-7 in Rochester, NY. Panels & presentations on preservation, research, teaching, exchanging, financing & sharing. Contact: Rochester Institute of Technology, College of Liberal Arts, Bruce Austin, 1 Lomb Memorial Dr., Box 9887, Rochester, NY 14623-0887; (716) 475-6649.

AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE Spring 1989 seminars in LA, NYC, DC, Minneapolis & SF. Topics incl. acting, screenwriting, business, computers. Contact: AFI, Public Service Programs, 2021 N. Western Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90027; (800) 999-4AFI.

INT'L EXPERIMENTAL FILM CONGRESS in Toronto will feature screenings, panels & presentations on avant-garde cinema. Programs incl. founding women of avant-garde, Hollis Frampton retro, nat'l prgms from Canada, W. Germany, E. Europe, Latin America, Europe. May 28-June 4. Contact: Jim Shedden, Int'l Experimental Film Congress, 2 Sussex Ave., Toronto, Ont. M5S 1J5, Canada; (416) 978-7790/588-8940.

CULTURAL COUNCIL FOUNDATION announces free consulting "clinics" for nonprofit arts groups in NYC. Staff specializes in areas such as fundraising, organizational devel., publicity, accounting & others. By appt only. Contact: Jenny Avery; (212) 473-5660.

AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE offers 4th annual TV Writers Summer Workshop. 2-wk June seminar, sponsored by NBC, will focus on writing sketch comedy for TV. Selected participants will work w/ leading TV writers, directors & producers to develop original material for possible inclusion in network comedy special. Deadline: Apr. 3. Contact: Dyanne Fries, AFI, TV/Video Services, 2021 N. Western Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90027; (213) 856-7743.

## Films • Tapes Wanted

REEL VIDEO is seeking film/video works for nat'l distrib.—sales & rental. Send submissions on VHS & clearly labeled w/ SASE & $11 (for screening & return

postage) w/ each tape. Please incl. SASE w/ all inquiries. Contact: Reel Video, Rt. 1, Box 72A, Linn, WV 26384.

'60s Era Footage: Varied Directions & Ricki Green of WETA-DC are beginning research on a new PBS/CPB-funded, 6-part TV series entitled *Making Sense of the Sixties*, slated for fall 1990. Looking for completed films from era & outtakes. Contact: Sue Welch or Andree Duggan, Varied Direction, 69 Elm St., Camden, ME 04843; (207) 236-8506.

Dowtown Community TV accepting tapes for ongoing Tues. night weekly screening series of doc, narrative, experimental, alternative & multi-media events. Submit 3/4" & 1/2" work w/ return postage & pertinent info to: Maria Beatty, screening director, DCTV, 87 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 966-4510.

Gas Station Film Probe: Forum for Experimental Cinema now accepting 16mm & super 8 entries for showcase at Gas Station. Contact: Ruben Garcia, 22 Ave. B & 2nd St., New York, NY 10009; (212) 673-3304.

New Day Films, self-distribution cooperative for indies, seeks new members w/ recent social issue docs or progressive films for young people. Deadline: April 1. Write: Ralph Arlyck, 79 Raymond Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12601.

## Opportunities • Gigs

Executive Director sought by FAIR (Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting) to work closely w/ founder/pres. in setting organizational priorities & planning growth. Candidates must have strong admin. background & familiarity w/ fundraising. Salary commensurate w/ experience. Affirmative action candidates encouraged to apply. Send resumé & cover letter to: Search Comm., FAIR, 130 W. 25th St., New York, NY 10001; (212) 633-6700.

Executive Director & Program Coordinator sought by Deep Dish TV Network. Contact: Deep Dish TV, 339 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10012; Attn: Personnel Committee, or call Caryn Rogoff; (718) 727-1414.

Director of Media Arts Ed. to take charge of extensive program in film, video, sound & computers. Create model programs in cooperation w/ education institutions. Design & manage progams for elementary through graduate levels. PhD or exceptional experience required. Contact: Film in the Cities, 2388 University Ave., St. Paul, MN 55114.

Asst. Professor in Film/Video Production for tenure trk position sought by Grand Valley State Univ. School of Communications. PhD or MFA preferred w/ experience in one or more of following areas: doc, animation, corporate, film/video art, studio TV, computer imaging, 16mm &/or portable field prod. as well as strong commitment to teaching theory, history, criticism & aesthetics. Initial 2-yr appointment begins Aug. 1989. Send statement of educ. philosophy, resumé, samples of work & 3 letters of recommendation to: Search Committee, School of Communications, Grand Valley State Univ., Allendale, MI 49401.

Video/Film Artist sought by Visual Arts Dept., UC San Diego for tenure track position beg. Fall '89. Exhibition & college teaching exp., MFA or equiv. required. Rank & sal. neg. Deadline: April 15. Write: David Antin, Visual Arts (B-027), Univ. of Cal. San Diego, La Jolla, CA 92093. Send letter, curriculum


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LEGACY INT'L YOUTH PROGRAM seeks videographers, instructors, editors for summer positions June 18-Aug. 18. Intercultural prgm deals w/ youth & adults in foothills of Blue Ridge Mtns. Non-smokers only. Contact: Marlene Ginsberg, Route 4, Box 265, Bedford, VA 24523; (703) 297-5982.

PRISON DOCUMENTARY: Finavision is developing doc w/ Channel 4-London on spiritual liberation & regeneration in prisons & is looking for coproducers in US. Contact: Jim Green/Philip O'Shea, Finavision Ltd., 45, Hazel Rd., London, NW 10, England; (tel) 01-969-1889, (fax) Philip O'Shea, c/o Linda Siefert Assoc., 01-221-0637.

VIDEO CURATOR: The Kitchen in NYC seeks curator to administer & facilitate on-going video exhibition. Actively involved in selection of work for int'l video distrib. program & special overseas media exhibits sponsored by Kitchen. Send resumé, support materials & program ideas to: Lauren Amazeen, The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St., New York, NY 10011.

## Publications •Software

LEGISLATIVE MASTERPIECES: 1989 update of CA arts/law publication avail. from California Lawyers for the Arts. Topics incl. CA Resale Royalties Act, CA Art Preservation Act, Artist/Dealer Relations, Talent Agents, Toxic Hazards in the Studio, Sale of Fine Prints, Privacy & Publicity & CA Housing Law. Price: $10 plus $.65 sales tax & $1 postage. (Out-of-state orders do not pay tax; members of CLA receive 10% discount & should pay $10.59.) Contact: California Lawyers for the Arts, Fort Mason Ctr., San Francisco, CA 94123; (415) 775-7200.

VIDEO DATA BANK: 1989 New Listings Supplement catalogs now avail. Incl. experimental videos on sex & gender; art & politics; AIDS; race & culture & contemporary art. Contact: Video Data Bank, 280 S. Columbus, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 443-3793.

HISTORY OF BRITISH VIDEO ART: New package of tapes influential in formation of video art. Incl. fully detailed & illustrated tape sleeve & comprehensive 6-page program. Contact: London Video Access, 23 Frith St., London W1V 5TS, UK; or call Marion Urch; 01-734-7410 or 01-437-2786.

WHILE AMERICA SLEEPS: AN ACTION AGENDA documents 8-mo. study by Rose Economou on quality & quantity of foreign affairs programming on US TV & radio. Study conducted for Council on Foreign Relations & funded by Ford Foundation. Contact: Council on Foreign Relations, 58 E. 68th St., New York, NY 10021; (212) 734-0400.

FOUNDATION CENTER'S new publications incl. *Directory of New & Emerging Foundations*, $75 & *New York State Foundations: A Comprehensive Directory*, $150. Add $2 shipping & handling. Contact: Foundation Center, 79 Fifth Ave., Dept. LX, New York, NY 10003; (800) 424-9836.

BLACK AMERICAN FILM: Up-to-date survey covers classics to contemporaries; incl. interviews, biographies, filmographies. Avail. in English & French. Send $20 to: CinemAction, 106, Blvd. Saint-Denis, 92400 Courbevoie, France.

## Resources • Funds

APPARATUS PRODUCTIONS seeks unique, 16mm film projects requiring funds for prod. or postprod. Provide support & limited funding on short, experimental narrative projects. Deadline: Apr. 1. For appl., send SASE to Apparatus Productions, 225 Lafayette St., Rm. 507, New York, NY 10012.

ASTREA FOUNDATION: Funds for women's orgs in PA, NY, NJ, RI, DC, MD, MA, DE & CT. Will consider media projects designed to serve as educ. & organizing tools to promote progressive social change. Grants from $500-5,000. Deadline: May 31. Appl. from Astrea Foundation, 666 Broadway, Ste. 610, New York, NY 10012; (212) 529-8021.

CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING: Open Solicitation deadlines: Apr. 21. Contact: Television Program Fund, CPB, 1111 16th St. NW, Washington, DC 20036.

FILM IN THE CITIES announces 1988-89 regional film/video grants. Prod. grants of up to $16,000 for new projects by mid-career artists w/ budgets less than $60,000. Encouragement grants of up to $3,000 for new projects by emerging artists w/ budgets less than $10,000. Work in progress grants of up to $7,000 for projects w/ at least half shooting completed or editing underway. Contact: F/V Grants, FITC, 2388 University Ave., St. Paul, MN 55114; (612) 646-6104.

1989-90 FULBRIGHT GRANTS avail. for US faculty in fields of communications & journalism. Openings in many countries still avail. PhD or teaching experience, evidence of scholarly productivity & US citizenship required. Contact: Council for Int'l Exchange of Scholars, 11 Dupont Circle, Ste. 300, Washington, DC 20036-1257.

GRANTS FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY ARTISTS administered by DiverseWorks & Southwest Alternative Media Project. Provides funds for artists whose activities fuse different disciplines, w/ grants of up to $5,000. Open to artists who are not full-time students & have resided for at least one yr in TX, OK, AK, NE, KS, or MS. Funding provided by Rockefeller Foundation & NEA. Deadline: May 1. Contact: GPIA, DiverseWorks, 214 Travis St., Houston, TX 77002; (713) 223-8346 or 522-8592.

MIDATLANTIC ARTS FOUNDATION Visual Arts Residency grants avail. for 1990/91 projects. Supports residencies by indiv. artists & prof. art critics. Deadline: July 14. Contact: MidAtlantic Arts Foundation, 11 E. Chase St., Ste. 2A, Baltimore, MD 21202; (301) 539-6656.

RISCA ORGANIZATIONAL GRANTS in Access Initiatives, Arts Programming, Education, General Operating Support & Organizational Development; also Individual Artist Support for Artist Development Grants & Artist Fellowships. Deadline: Apr. 1. Contact: Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, 95 Cedar St., Ste. 103, Providence, RI 02903; (401) 277-3880.

WOMEN IN FILM FOUNDATION GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS: Family Ties Scholarship of $25,000 to a woman w/ 1 or more children or divided among several women, to pursue or continue educ. in film, TV, communications or media journalism. Film Finishing Fund offers completion grants for ind. films & tapes by women on general humanitarian concerns, Loreeen Arbus Award of $5,000 for an ind. prod. by a woman on issues related to disability & CFI Services Award in-kind grant of postprod. services for ind. film by a woman based in

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LA. Deadline: Apr. 10. Contact: Women in Film Foundation, Women in Film, 6464 Sunset Blvd., Ste. 660, Los Angeles, CA 90028, Attn: Pam Pulver.

BARBARA ARONOFSKY LATHAM MEMORIAL GRANTS awarded for work that demonstrates potential in 2 cats: Video & Electronic Visual Art; History, Theory & Criticism of Video or Electronic Art. Grants range from $300-1500. Must be over 18-yrs-old to apply. Appl. deadline: April 15. For appl. guidelines, contact: Office of the Provost, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Columbus Drive at Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 443-3937.

## Trims & Glitches

CONGRATS to Liane Brandon who received a 1988 Special Commendation from the Boston Society of Film Critics for "outstanding examination of social issues through film."

KUDOS to Loni Ding & Donna Matorin, 1988 winners of James D. Phelan Arts Awards in Video.

AIVF MEMBERS who received grants from Independent Production Fund are Ingrid Weigand, Ana Maria Garcia, Luisa Guida, Jan Krawitz & Kim Smith. Congratulations!

BARBARA ABRASH & MARTHA SANDLIN, coproducers of *Indians, Outlaws and Angie Debo*, received Eric Barnouw Award & Wrangler Award. Congratulations!

KUDOS to winners of Jerome Foundation film & video artist production grants: Todd Haynes, Franco Marinai, Terese Svoboda, Anne Flournoy, Doug Eisenstark & Jack Walsh.

CHRISTIAN & STEFFAN PIERCE & Zone Art Center won grants from the Mass Productions program of the Massachusetts Council on the Arts & Humanities. Congratulations!

CONGRATS to Zone Production's video documentary *They Say They Will/Decen Que Lo Haran*, which received Silver Award at the 1988 Houston Int'l Film Festival.


**HEALTH INSURANCE FOR AIVF MEMBERS**

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# PROGRAM NOTES


Karen Ranucci

*International Production Services project coordinator and director of Latin American research*


As *The Independent* reported in November 1987, the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF)* received a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to research and publish a directory of film and video production resources in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. After some initial research, we decided to publish three separate directories—one for each region. I was hired to coordinate the Latin American directory. This section has been completed and will be printed and distributed soon. Pearl Bowser is researching and compiling the African section. Work will begin on the Asian section later this year.

Over the past two years I contacted about 1000 individuals and groups throughout Latin America and the Caribbean and entered information in a computerized database. The original plan was to focus on independent producers, but as the research progressed we learned that distinctions like "independent" and "commercial" are not always useful or appropriate. Since there is almost no funding for independent production in Latin America, independents must often work commercially and produce their own work "on the side." In other cases, it also became necessary to list state-run institutions. For example, there are no private production groups in Cuba. Therefore, the database categorized each group as one of four types: state-run, nonprofit, commercial, or independent. The directory will also detail:

- The kind of work they do, i.e., whether a production company, exhibitor, distributor, festival, broadcast outlet, equipment repair technician, publication, film lab, association/network, archive, audio specialist, or information provider.
- Whether they work in film, video, or both.
- What services they offer, i.e., customs liaison, transportation, translation, location scouting, production assistants, camera operators, and sound and lighting technicians.
- Whether they rent production and/or postproduction equipment.
- Whether they can make transfers—such as film to tape, tape to film, film to film, or video standard conversion.

FIVF is also exploring the possibility of periodically updating this information and adapting it for specialized uses. For example, if someone wanted a list of video repair technicians in Bolivia, we would be able to pull a list from the data and print it.

The process of making these contacts has been both an arduous and enriching experience. International communication, especially by post, is unreliable at best. Much of the work was accomplished by exploring personal contacts and building relationships. Some groups were reluctant to give information about their work. They were not familiar with AIVF or FIVF and unsure of the purpose of the survey. To reassure them that our aim was to collect and share information in a way that would be mutually beneficial, we made two promises: we would not list a group that did not respond to our questionnaire in the directory, and each group listed would receive a free copy of the published book. The success of this policy is demonstrated by the 400 responses we received from the 1,000 questionnaires we have distributed.

The Latin American directory will be published in both English and Spanish. FIVF's distribution of the Spanish version in Latin America will be undertaken by the Instituto Para America Latina (IPAL), a Peruvian group that researches, analyses, publishes reports, and organizes conferences on subjects relating to international communication. The Instituto has been a great help during the project's research phase by giving us lists of their Latin American contacts, and they will print and distribute the Spanish language directory.

Much of the information contained in these directories will become dated very quickly. We are including a blank questionnaire in the directory, so that groups who are not currently listed or groups who are listed but need to change some of the published information can do so. We hope to maintain contact with people who are traveling in Latin America and willing to take questionnaires to local film and video groups in foreign countries.** We have established cooperative relationships with a number of groups throughout Latin America that are capable of updating information about their country and returning that revised information to our office.

When this project was first proposed to the Rockefeller Foundation, we knew that the directories would be valuable to North American independent video- and filmmakers shooting in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. What we didn't know was that film- and videomakers in those regions shared the desire to know more about their colleagues in North America and Europe as well as independents in the countries that will be covered in the directories. Independent film- and videomakers in many countries are beginning to organize their own associations. Our work may be helpful to their efforts. In time, perhaps together we can build an international AIVF.

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* FIVF is the educational foundation affiliate of AIVF which obtains grants for seminars, publications, and public information activities about independent media. Many of AIVF's programs are cosponsored by FIVF.

** If you are traveling and can help us make international contacts, please call us at AIVF, (212) 473-3400.

# FIVF DONOR-ADVISED FILM AND VIDEO FUND

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The Donor-Advised Film and Video Fund works with foundations and individual donors who wish to support independently produced social issue media. A peer review panel screens works and recommends finalists to donors for funding consideration. In 1989, FIVF is seeking proposals for works in the following categories:

## PEACE

The Benton Foundation will make two grant awards in this area totalling $15,000: the Marjorie Benton Peace Film Award of $5,000 for a completed film or video that best promotes public understanding of international peace and a $10,000 post-production grant for a work-in-progress whose photography is substantially completed and that advances the interests of international peace.

## COMMUNICATIONS

The Benton Foundation will also award a $10,000 post-production grant for a work-in-progress that explores the role of communications and information in society.

## ENVIRONMENT

The Beldon Fund will make grants totalling $20,000 for production, editing, completion or distribution of works dealing with environmental issues.

## SOCIAL CHANGE

The Edelman Family will make grants totalling $12,000 for projects that explore or document social change. Preference will be given to requests for development funds for projects addressing contemporary issues.

The Donor-Advised Film and Video Fund is interested in projects that combine intellectual clarity and journalistic quality with creative film- and videomaking. Priority will be given to works on issues that have received minimal coverage and have potential for wide distribution.

For application materials send a self-addressed stamped envelope to:
FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th Floor, New York, NY 10012.

Applicants must be affiliated with a tax-exempt nonprofit organization. Institutional projects for internal or promotional use, public television station productions, and student productions are not eligible.

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**Deadline for receipt of applications is July 3, 1989.**
Grant decisions will be made on or before December 15, 1989.

## MINUTES OF THE AIVF/FIVF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

At its meeting on January 28, 1989, the AIVF/FIVF board of directors decided to continue to review possibilities for a new logo. The board thought the logo should convey "strength," "activism," "movement," and an attention to video as well as film. Portfolios will be solicited from graphic designers and considered at the next board meeting.

The board discussed an updated *Guide to Distributors* which FIVF plans to publish using a grant from the MacArthur Foundation. Kathryn Bowser, festival bureau and information services director, reported on the progress of the guide, which will include information about more than 200 distributors.

Karen Ranucci reported on the development of the guide to Latin American production resources, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. The guide, which will include approximately 400 entries, will be published this spring in both English and Spanish editions, and will be distributed in the U.S. and Latin America. The board discussed possible ways to update the guide, and requested that Ranucci prepare written recommendations for maintaining a permanent database. Pearl Bowser has begun research on a similar guide to resources in Africa.

The increasing cost of AIVF's health insurance plan was noted and discussed, and the board supported staff efforts to locate and offer members a less expensive plan. Suggestions from members are welcome.

*The Independent* reported that it has a new part-time advertising director. Andy Moore joined the staff in late November and will be handling all display advertising sales for the magazine.

The next two board meetings are scheduled for March 18 and June 17, 1989. Members are encouraged to attend board meetings and work with committees. Confirm dates in advance. For more information, call AIVF, (212) 473-3400.

## FIVF THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the foundation affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent producer community, including publication of *The Independent*, maintenance of the Festival Bureau, seminars and workshops, an information clearinghouse, and a grant-making program. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the following agencies, foundations and organizations: The New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fund, the Beldon Fund, the Morgan Guaranty Trust Company of New York, the Consolidated Edison Company of New York, the Benton Foundation, the Funding Exchange, and the dozens of organizations that advertise in *The Independent*.

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This production still from *Who Killed Vincent Chin?*, which was nominated for an Academy Award in the feature documentary category, pictures codirectors and coproducers Renee Tajima (far left) and Christine Choy (between camera operator and soundperson) on location shooting one of the interviews for their film. This year, the staff of *The Independent*, as well as everyone who works at AIVF, will watch the awards ceremony with acute interest, in hopes that an Oscar will go to our colleagues Renee and Chris—*Independent* associate editor and AIVF board member, respectively. (We got this news after our copy deadline was well past. Other AIVF members who received Academy Award nominations will be cited in the May issue.) Photo courtesy Film News Now Foundation.

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COVER: Film still from *Las Madres: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo*, by Susana Muñoz and Lourdes Portillo. The film describes the campaign of Argentinean women who seek information about their children and grandchildren who were "disappeared" during the years that the right-wing military dictatorship was in power. *Las Madres* is part of a growing body of film and video productionsmade by women which has developed over the past decade, changing the shape and direction of New Latin American Cinema. In "Unofficial Stories: Documentaries by Latinas and Latin American Women," Liz Kotz examines the impetus, themes, and stylistic innovations of this work. Photo courtesy Direct Cinema.

# TO HALVE AND HALVE NOT: MASSACHUSETTS CUTS ARTS FUNDING

Artists and arts administrators were caught by surprise on February 22 when the Massachusetts House Ways and Means Committee proposed to cut the budget of the state's Council on the Arts and Humanities from the $19.5-million of fiscal year 1989 to zilch in 1990. "The Council had expected a cut, but had never contemplated abolition," wrote reporter Jeff McLaughlin in the *Boston Globe*. In what was termed a compromise, the House of the Massachusetts legislature subsequently decided on slightly less than 50 percent funding (which may be increased by the state Senate) in order to fulfill the slogan "No New Taxes."

In the days that followed the initial proposal to wipe out funding for the Council, many media arts organizations phoned or wrote their members urging them to contact their state legislators to protest the cuts. "It happened so suddenly, there was little time for organizational discussions about how to combat the proposal," says Abraham Ravett, a filmmaker from Florence, Massachusetts. The local newspapers and TV news programs chose to emphasize the positive economic impact of arts funding on the state's fiscal health. That's partly because the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) had just prepared a study of the effect of the nonprofit sector on the state economy, and what it said was news: The Massachusetts cultural industry generated $1.24-billion in spending in 1988, as compared to $496-million in 1978. The benefit to the state in terms of tourist dollars, tax revenues, and jobs was echoed by media arts groups on the assumption that this is what would make voters and legislators favorably disposed toward the Council, despite a large state deficit.

There was some discussion in the *Boston Globe* of science programs for school children that would suffer if funding for the Council was cut significantly. But, in public at least, there was little emphasis on the way the arts educate residents and visitors about controversial social issues, ethics, and diverse cultures. A March 8 rally for the Council in front of the State House did address these humanistic and political concerns, but they were hardly reported.

"Has there been a genuine public debate?" asks Jill Medvedow, director of contemporary arts at NEFA. "The question of values has hardly come up, and there's been almost no conversation about progressive taxation in this state." Media artists have been as reluctant as anyone to mouth the word "taxes." In response to pro-arts lobbying, state senator John Olver urged one constituent, "Voice your support for fair taxation." This might mean joining the Tax Equity Alliance for Massachusetts in pushing for the elimination of capital gains deductions. Lobbying for an amendment to the state constitution to institute a graduated state income tax is another possibility.

On March 9, the Massachusetts House approved an allocation of $9.5-million for the Council, to come out of lottery revenues. If the state Senate awards a different amount, a compromise will have to be hammered out by a conference committee and then passed by both legislative houses. This process could be lengthy and all concerned have been advised to keep the heat on.

How would cuts of 50 percent effect the media arts in Massachusetts? "It's too early to say how the money would be utilized, but it would mean cuts in everything," says Council spokesperson Faye Rapoport. Individuals like Ravett would not get full funding to complete a two-year film project. "Film stock, optical printing—all sorts of production and postproduction costs—would not be met," Ravett says.

Institutions like Boston Film/Video Foundation might have to raise prices across the board (on equipment rental, screenings, membership, etc.), cut back on activities that don't earn income, and program semi-commercial events that are sure to bring in revenue, director Anne Marie Stein notes. Susan Walsh of Newton Television Foundation, a nonprofit video production center, is worried about how to replace the general operational support that the Council has provided—about 25 percent of the Foundation's budget. "It will be hard to replace the Merit Aid money if it is lost, because foundations like to support special projects, as opposed to general operating expenses," says Walsh. It's also difficult to interest corporations and foundations in super 8, sociopolitical, and experimental works, which panels at the Massachusetts Council have often funded. "You can't say that the private sector will pick up the difference," says NEFA's Medvedow. "That hasn't worked in the last eight years."

It seems certain that cuts in the Council would make Massachusetts a more provincial place. Senegalese filmmaker Safi Faye accepted an invitation to the next Dorothy Arzner International Film and Video Festival, sponsored by the New

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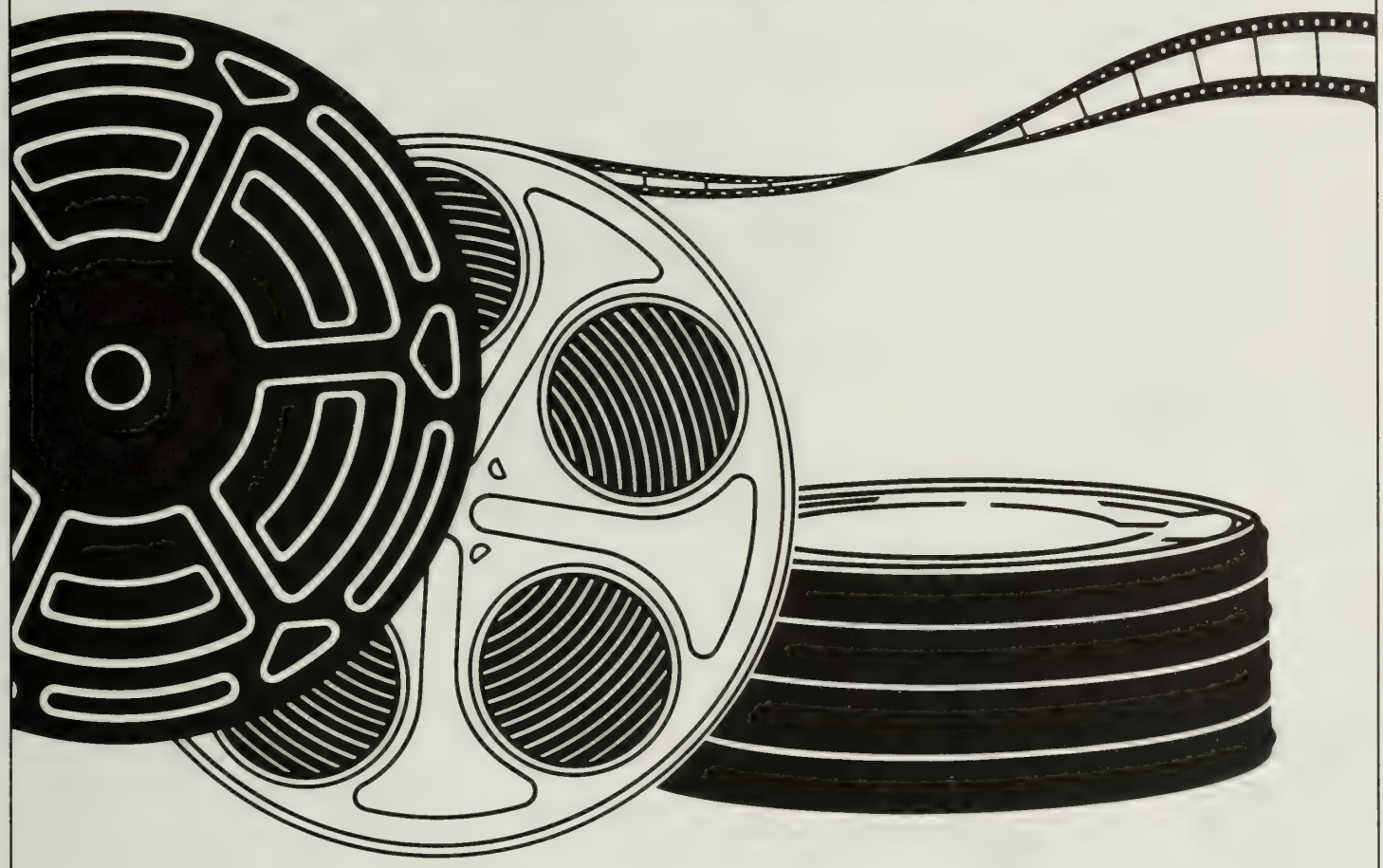
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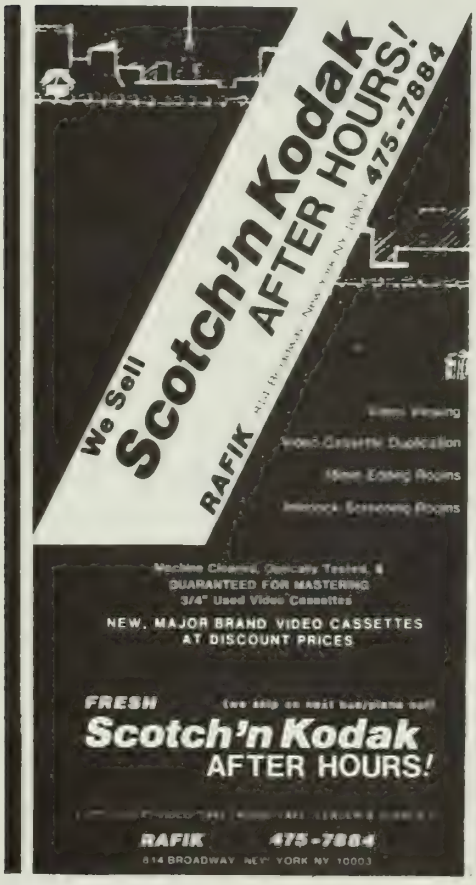
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England organization Women in Film and Video. The big question is whether they will receive funding to bring international films and filmmakers to the Boston area. (Their application for fiscal year 1990 is under review.) Needless to say, there are precious few commercial venues for foreign films these days, even in Boston and the Amherst/Northampton area.

And then there is the export of culture from the state, which the Council has facilitated. *Mixed Signals*, produced by Medvedow at NEFA and curated by Michele Furst, produces and distributes programs of short works to over 150 cable channels in New England. It receives Council money, as does the Contemporary Art Television (CAT) Fund at the Institute of Contemporary Art, whose programs have been broadcast in Europe, Australia, and Canada, as well as the United States. The CAT Fund stands to be doubly affected by decreased state funding, because the National Endowment for the Arts often matches Massachusetts Council grants, says ICA director David Ross.

If the Massachusetts experience proves anything, it's that film- and videomakers cannot afford complacency. A multi-faceted strategy must be worked out to combat would-be budget slashers. If the Massachusetts Council—a leader among state arts agencies—is vulnerable, media artists in other states would be unwise to rest secure. McLaughlin of the *Boston Globe* has already posed the ominous question: "Is Massachusetts a harbinger?"

KAREN ROSENBERG




## IPS UPDATE

With an October 1 deadline as the sole point of agreement, the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting have embarked on a series of negotiations over the establishment of the new Independent Production Service mandated by Congress in the Public Telecommunications Act of 1988. In the law, Congress directed CPB to "work with organizations or associations of independent producers or independent production entities to develop a plan and budget for the operation of such service." The Coalition submitted a plan for setting up the new service to CPB in October, shortly before the President signed the bill. That plan proposed a six-person "temporary incorporating committee," which would develop by-laws, incorporation papers, a mission statement, and board selection procedures and then submit these to CPB for approval as required by law. Despite the Coalition's requests that CPB move quickly, the Corporation did not call its first working meeting with Coalition representatives until late February.

On February 23, CPB representatives Jennifer Lawson of the Program Fund, Joseph Widoff from the Business Affairs Office, and Sylvia Winik from CPB's legal office met in Washington, D.C., with Larry Hall, Lawrence Sapadin, and the Coalition's lawyer David M. Rice. Although both sides expressed optimism about the prompt establishment of the IPS, CPB raised objections to the Coalition's plan. As a result, further meetings have been stalled and a thick sheaf of often heated correspondence has been generated.

The specific differences between the two groups at times seem like legalistic haggling, but the disputes reflect significant disagreements about the underlying purpose of an Independent Production Service and the Coalition's role as representative of independent producers in dealing with CPB. For example, CPB took the position that the Coalition's negotiating team was not sufficiently representative in terms of geographical regions, ethnicity, or film/video genres. The Coalition committee consists of Neighborhood Film/Video Project executive director Linda Blackaby, independent producers Pam Yates and Hector Galan, the Coalition's legislative liaison Larry Hall, Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers executive director Lawrence Sapadin, Film Arts Foundation executive director Gail Silva, and Ohio Valley Regional Media Arts Coalition director Austin Allen (who was added to the committee at the Coalition's meeting in Rochester, New York). In response, the Coalition indicated that it was willing to expand the committee to include organizations of every kind requested by CPB. CPB replied by insisting on a the creation of a new, non-Coalition incorporating group and would not accept an expanded Coalition team. More recently, CPB suggested bypassing the stage of convening an incorporating committee altogether and instead commencing selection of the first board for the IPS. In this scheme, the incorporation process would then be turned over for the new board to work out with CPB, and, formally, the Coalition would be out of the picture. While the Coalition agreed in principle with an accelerated process, it wanted to negotiate with CPB on a statement of purpose and future board selection procedures before turning matters over to an as yet unnamed board of directors. CPB refused. In addition, CPB insisted on its right to appoint board members unilaterally—without Coalition approval.

CPB also insisted on the participation of station representatives in any incorporation negotiations. The Coalition, on the other hand, strongly objected to station involvement in drawing the blueprint for the new service, pointing out that the stations have vigorously opposed the Independent Production Service and arguing that such involvement would be a clear conflict of interest. In an effort to compromise, the Coalition offered to permit station personnel to participate as part of CPB's team at the bargaining table, but CPB declined. Instead, they insisted on the stations' involvement as full third parties to the negotiations. That would permit station representatives to veto agreements reached by CPB and the Coalition. The legislation calls for CPB alone to work

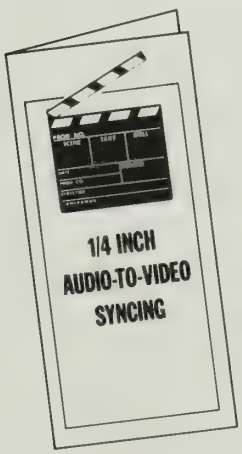
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1. The Independent Production Service (IPS) is established pursuant to the Public Broadcasting Act of 1988 for the purpose of contracting with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) for the production of public television programs by independent producers and independent production entities.

2. The IPS, through its policies and practices, will be designed to further the federal public broadcasting policy of encouraging the development of programming that involves creative risks and that addresses the needs of unserved and underserved audiences, particularly children and minorities.

3. IPS will commission, acquire, package, distribute, and promote independently-produced television programming. Its funds will be used *exclusively* to expand the diversity and innovativeness of programming available to public broadcasting.

4. The IPS will undertake to support programs that do not duplicate programming already available on public broadcasting or other commercial telecommunications services. The IPS will develop new audiences.

5. IPS will work diligently to insulate its programming decisions from the pressures both of undue political influence and of marketplace forces. Specifically, IPS will neither select nor evaluate programs on the basis of suitability for corporate underwriting or viewer subscription development, or the ability to attract outside production funding.

6. The IPS will be governed by a board of distinguished citizens who, individually, have a demonstrated commitment to the goals of diversity, innovation, excellence, and artistic and editorial integrity in public broadcasting programming. In addition, board members will be required to have a demonstrated awareness and understanding of independent media. Collectively, the board will reflect a racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, regional, and artistic diversity and will also reflect the diversity of television genres.

7. Public broadcasting station personnel will be represented on the IPS advisory council and on its governing board as appropriate and on the basis of commitment to the above goals and policies for independent production and public broadcasting.

8. The IPS must remain accountable to the independent producer community. Accordingly, the organizations and associations of the independent media field, through their representative National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers (National Coalition), shall select board members to serve on the governing board of the IPS. Board members must be acceptable to CPB, but CPB shall not unreasonably refuse to accept a board member proposed by the National Coalition.

9. The IPS will work with independent producers and public broadcasting station personnel and their representatives to promote maximum appropriate carriage within the public broadcasting system of the programs that the IPS funds.

* These principles were unanimously adopted by the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers at the group's March 20 meeting in Rochester, New York.

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with independent producer organizations to set up the service. No mention is made of station involvement in the incorporation phase, although report language accompanying the law suggests that stations should be represented on the boards that oversee and advise the IPS.

Traditionally, public TV stations—especially the large, powerful stations in major markets—have not been receptive to risky or controversial independent work. The Coalition's position regarding station involvement in the formative stages of the IPS is meant to prevent restrictions in the service's scope or imposition of a narrow view of the work that it may support. In a letter to CPB, Coalition negotiator Hall characterized the plan to give PBS a central role in the IPS as a recapitulation of CPB's "erosion of Open Solicitations as a vehicle for diversity and innovation."

In an effort to dismantle CPB's roadblock to negotiations, media centers from around the country are once again calling and writing the key Congressional personnel asking them to press CPB to recognize the Coalition as the field's designated representative on the IPS. Only then will CPB and independent producers be able to begin the task of setting up a pioneering, new program service for public television.

MARTHA GEVER

## SILVERLIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

What do you do when your film has been to the Cannes, Berlin, and Montreal festivals, received the Grand Prize at the United States Film Festival, garnered rave reviews in the trade papers, been advertised in *Variety*—and you still cannot find a distributor? When faced with this predicament, the makers of *Heat and Sunlight*, Rob Nilsson, Steve Burns, and Hildy Burns, decided to opt for self-distribution with the assistance of a new consulting firm, Silverlight Entertainment.

Silverlight was formed last year by Mark Lipsky, a former vice president of Miramax. His intention was to help "fill the void that is becoming larger and larger" for independents who are not able to find a distributor. Silverlight, a one-man operation, is a consulting service rather than a distribution company. Explains Lipsky, "I'm offering self-distribution with a guiding hand. I give advice on every matter of distribution, from shipping prints, to what messenger to call, to advertising, publicity, and promotion." As Lipsky sees it, the services he offers are "as good as those of a distributor, but without the loss. The producers maintain financial and creative control over everything. They are not bound to go along with anything I say." Unlike a distribution company, all rights remain with the producers. The expenses and sales revenues are theirs as well. As Steve Burns puts it, "Money is the difference. We're essentially operating out of our pockets." When working with Silverlight, the producer covers the cost of everything from shipping to advertising to


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prints. The payoff in this arrangement is that it is the producer, not a distributor, who reaps the financial reward if the film is successful. Depending on the film, Lipsky receives either a flat fee, a percentage, or a combination of both. But, because of his low overhead, his percentages are far less than the cuts distributors regularly take.

The producers of *Heat and Sunlight* met Lipsky at one of the screenings they had arranged for distributors in various cities. At the New York preview Lipsky introduced himself and offered his services, and *Heat and Sunlight* became Silverlight's first major distribution project. (The company also acts as a producers representative and is involved in production.) With Lipsky's guidance, *Heat and Sunlight* obtained theatrical bookings in several key markets. It opened in last fall in San Francisco at the Kabuki Theatre with a seven week run, then played in Berkeley for five weeks and San Jose for three. This spring the film was booked in New York City at the Carnegie and Bleeker Street Theaters and in Santa Cruz at the Nickelodeon Theater. Says Burns, "Lipsky gives us advice on everything. He helped get the theaters for us. We worked on the ads together and he got our publicity agent for us."

Though lacking the clout of a big name distributor, Lipsky says they managed to get the film into theaters "because we called them up and told them we had great reviews. The theaters took a leap and accepted us." The opening in San Francisco also helped provide momentum; the film took in $9,000 its first weekend and went on to earn $45,000 to $50,000 over the seven-week run in a 230-seat theater. "Getting into theaters isn't difficult," says Lipsky. "Keeping them there is the problem." Knowing how to do this is one area in which Lipsky's experience at Miramax pays off.

When asked why distributors are shying away from innovative independent films, Lipsky responds, "Distributors have to deal with big overheads. They have forgotten how to do it on this level." Also, he says, even the smaller distributors are looking for more commercial films. "You know that the marketplace is changing when you see Cinecom doing Richard Dreyfuss movies."

For more information on Silverlight Entertainment, call (212) 722-8074. For information on *Heat and Sunlight*, call Snowball Productions at (415) 567-4404.

LORNA JOHNSON

## FILM FORUM'S DEMOLITION DEADLINE

The Film Forum twin theater, a nonprofit showcase of U.S. independent and foreign films in downtown Manhattan, will be torn down within the next year in order to make way for a 20-story office tower. The theater's board and director are currently looking for a new home and are negotiating a financial settlement to help in the construction of comparable facilities.

Founded in 1970, Film Forum moved in 1981 into its present space, a commercial garage on Watts Street, which was refurbished by architects Stephen Tilly and Alan Buchsbaum. The comfortable, friendly quarters have been home to cineastes drawn to Film Forum's innovative programming and have provided a professional setting for the theatrical premieres of countless independent productions. Since a premiere at Film Forum often nets a review in the *New York Times*, *Village Voice*, and other newspapers, the theater has played a central role in the theatrical launching of many independent features, including such films as *Born in Flames*, by Lizzie Borden, *We Were So Beloved*, by Manny Kirchheimer, *Rate It X*, by Lucy Winer and Paula de Koenigsberg, *Las Madres: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo*, by Susan Muñoz and Lourdes Portillo, and more recently *Lodz Ghetto*, by Kathryn Taverna and Alan Adelson, as well as *Lightning over Braddock*, by Tony Buba. In its foreign programming, Film Forum's selections range from the revered to the obscure. The current spring calendar includes an extensive four-week Fassbinder retrospective, a series of Kurosawa's rarely seen works from the 1940s, and a series of new features from such countries as Taiwan (Hou Hsiao-hsien's *Dust in the Wind*), England (Derek Jarman's *The Last of England*), and the Soviet Union (Yuri Illyenko's *The Eve of Ivan Kupalo*).




Film Forum, a downtown Manhattan duplex theater that shows independent and foreign films, will be torn down within the year to make way for a 20-story office tower.

Courtesy, Film Forum

Karen Cooper, Film Forum's director since 1972, said news of the theater's planned demolition came to her without warning. One day in December, she recalls, "when I arrived at work, I saw drilling rigs in the theater's parking lot checking for bedrock." A call to the landlord, Trinity Realty, an arm of the Parish of Trinity Church in New York, revealed that they had contracted with Minskoff Equities to develop the property. Although Film Forum signed a 21-year lease in 1980, it contained a demolition clause allowing Trinity to oust its tenant in exchange for $275,000 if the theater was ever demolished. Minskoff Equities, rather than Trinity, will be covering this sum and will actively help Film Forum locate a new home. According to Cooper, Trinity Church has made no offer to assist Film Forum financially or otherwise. Film Forum has 12 months—until mid-February 1990—to relocate. If the theater agrees to move out before that period is up, says Cooper, Minskoff would have to contribute "substantially more" in settlement dollars in return.

Cooper's search for new quarters is focused on downtown Manhattan, although she allows for the possibility of a move elsewhere. The renovation of a leased space into a two-theater cinema appears the most likely course, as opposed to either taking over an existing theater or purchasing property—both of which would be prohibitively expensive in New York's over-inflated real estate market. "But," adds Cooper, "I want a lease without a demolition clause." The estimated cost of renovating a space comparable to the current theater is $1-million. Once a new lease is obtained, Film Forum will initiate a major capital expenditure drive.

PATRICIA THOMSON

## STANDBY ON STANDBY

On March 1 Ed Train, vice president of Megamedia, the company that took over Matrix Video in Manhattan last August, announced to the assembled staff that the company was closing its doors, effective the next day, and fired the approximately 40 employees of the facility. Luckily for the independent videomakers who had edited their tapes at Megamedia under the auspices of the nonprofit Standby program and therefore had masters stored at Megamedia, the Standby collective had grown suspicious of Megamedia's intentions the previous week when they were notified that all the locks would be changed and the facility closed for the weekend, contrary to usual operations. In two hours time late one night, the Standby crew and friends moved all the one-inch masters to the nearby offices of Prelinger Associates,

where these were stored until they had time to notify the producers of the whereabouts of their materials.

Founded in 1983 by Rick Feist, who remains one of the directors of the program, and Alex Roshuk, then director of the nonprofit media center 185 Nassau, Standby was one of the first on-line artists' video editing access programs in the country. Feist was working at Matrix at the time and proposed a plan that would allow editing of noncommercial projects at greatly reduced rates. Access was offered at night and on weekends, with the proviso that a session might be cancelled if a commercial client booked the time in the facility. Thus the name Standby. Matrix accepted the idea, and initially Feist worked as the editor for independent clients while Roshuk did the paperwork. Since then the staff of Standby has grown to 10, including six editors and several administrator/schedulers.

In 1985 the Raindance Corporation assumed administrative responsibility for Standby, following a rift between Feist and Roshuk. Nevertheless, the structure of the program has remained intact. Of course, the rates have risen to reflect increased rates in the commercial sector. Originally an hour of editing time on three-quarter-inch equipment, assisted by an editor, cost $45; now the price is $60 for the same service, compared to $250 on the commercial scale. Standby charges $75 per hour for Betacam editing and $100 for one-inch.

Many videomakers apply to the program because they want to take advantage of the sophisticated computer editing and special effects available at a postproduction house like Megamedia. Now that Megamedia has closed, Standby administrator/fundraiser Kathryn High speculated that Standby "might want to branch out into several smaller facilities." But as this issue of *The Independent* went to press, the Standby group was waiting to find out the results of negotiations with what High identified as "a large Manhattan facility." When asked to compare the Standby program to the On-Line program administered by the New York Media Alliance, which also negotiates editing time for independent videomakers who want to work at high-end video editing facilities, High explained, "Standby is a pool of editors who have worked at one facility. On-Line directs clients to one of several facilities, based on the nature of a given project. In fact, we get about 15 percent of our clients from On-Line." She added, "I don't want to compete with them for funding," referring to the sizable grants both programs receive from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts. Last year Standby was awarded about $57,000 in government subsidies.

The number of videomakers who have edited their tapes at Matrix/Megamedia under Standby is approximately 200, and they have completed about 275 projects through the program. Many, High said, were New York artists, but a number came from elsewhere in the country and even from overseas. Although the highly successful project


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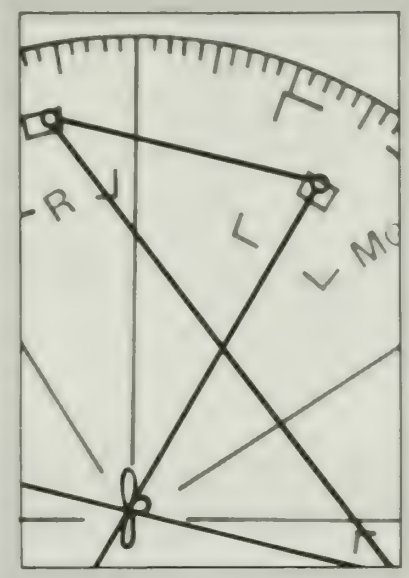
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is currently searching for a home—or, perhaps, several—she is optimistic about the future: "Standby will come out of this upheaval much stronger and with a more thorough understanding of its direction. We look forward to offering postproduction services to the independent media community."

MG

## MACARTHUR MEDIA FUNDING EXPANDS

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation marked its third year as a major private funder of U.S. independent media by awarding $1.7-million to media arts centers in 1988. The grants, given to 53 nonprofit media organizations, total almost twice as much as the $912,500 awarded to 46 organizations in 1987.

In New York, the American Museum of the Moving Image received $50,000; AIVF/FIVF, $25,000; Asian CineVision, $10,000; Black Filmmaker Foundation, $10,000; Downtown Community Television Center, $100,000; Electronic Arts Intermix, $25,000; Film Forum, $50,000; Film/Video Arts, $100,000; Global Village Video Resource Center, $25,000; Media Alliance, $10,000; Museum of Modern Art, $50,000; Whitney Museum of American Art, $25,000; and Visual Studies Workshop, $25,000.

In California, Pacific Film Archive was awarded $50,000; Filmforum, $10,000; Long Beach Museum of Art Foundation, $25,000; American Film Institute, $25,000; UCLA Film and Television Archive, $100,000; Visual Communications/Asian American Studies Central, $25,000; Bay Area Video Coalition, $25,000; Cine Acción, $10,000; Film Arts Foundation, $25,000; and Foundation for Art in Cinema, $10,000.

In Illinois, the Center for New Television was granted $100,000; Chicago Filmmakers, $25,000; Community Film Workshop of Chicago, $10,000; Facets Multimedia, $50,000; and School of the Art Institute of Chicago Film Center, $25,000.

Grants to media arts centers in other states were as follows: Rocky Mountain Film Center (CO), $100,000; Black Film Institute (DC), $10,000; National Learning Center (DC), $50,000; IMAGE Film/Video Center (GA), $10,000; Appalshop (KY), $50,000; New Orleans Video Access Center, $10,000; Boston Film/Video Foundation, $50,000; Institute of Contemporary Art (MA), $10,000; Intermedia Arts of Minnesota, $50,000; Film in the Cities (MN), $50,000; University Film Society/Minnesota Film Center, $25,000; Walker Art Center (MN), $10,000; Helena Film Society (MT), $25,000; Sheldon Film Theater (University of Nebraska-Lincoln), $10,000; Center for Contemporary Arts of Santa Fe, $25,000; Athens Center for Film and Video (OH), $10,000; Media Project (OR), $10,000; Northwest Film and Video Project (OR), $25,000; Neighborhood Film/Video Project (PA), $25,000; Carnegie Museum of Art (PA), $10,000; Pittsburgh Filmmakers, $50,000; South Carolina Arts Commission, $10,000; Southwest Alternate Media Project (TX), $50,000; Utah Media Arts Center, $10,000; and 911 Contemporary Arts Center (WA), $10,000.

The grants are intended to assist the production and distribution of new and innovative independent film and video work by allowing media arts centers to broaden their funding bases. "We're seeing media arts centers develop from struggling experiments to permanent institutions that enhance the diversity of opinion heard in the media and provide the public with a richer and more stimulating media experience," said MacArthur Foundation director William T. Kirby.

The MacArthur Foundation also awarded $1.2-million to six organizations as part of a new media program to increase public awareness of global environmental issues. The grant recipients include five projects about tropical rainforest deforestation and strategies for preservation. PTV Productions of New York City received $300,000 towards the production of a one-hour documentary entitled *Tropical Forests: A Vital Source*, by Robert Richter. The Center for New Television in Chicago received $75,000 for Vic Banks' multimedia profile of the Pantanal Wilderness in Brazil. Biosphere Films in New York received a $35,000 grant for the completion of *Conservation of the Southern Rainforest*, by Douglas Freilich and Julie Sperling, as did the Missouri Botanical Garden for *Tropical Biology*, to be produced by Karen Rogers and directed by Robin T. Rutledge. The St. Louis Ambassadors Arts and Fountains Foundation also received funds from the foundation within this category

The MacArthur Foundation also gave a three-year, $1.2-million grant to *P.O.V.*, the independent documentary series that premiered in July 1988 on public television. Additional media projects funded by MacArthur include *The Independents*, a series featuring the work of independent producers on the Learning Channel and the Public Broadcasting Service, *The Conversations of Democracy*, a PBS series hosted by Bill Moyers, and a program through which public libraries have access to public television series.

KELLY ANDERSON

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# STEPHEN C. NING: 1950-1989

It seemed only a short time ago that a motley caravan from New York—Columbia and New York University film school alumni, Third World Newsreelers, and Chinatown activists—donned suits and skirts for Steve Ning and Yuet Fung Ho's wedding in Boston's Chinatown. There, the couple's adopted circle of friends boogied with the Ning-Wong clan, first family of Cambridge's Chinese community. The groom's hair was about a foot longer than the bride's and, true to form, Steve waited until *after* the wedding to get a haircut, making sure that Yuet and filmmaker Chris Choy would be on hand at the barbershop to shoot the scene.

Steve's quiet humor and imagination, his sense of mischief, and the ability to make us all feel a part of that extended family will be sorely missed. Last March, many of us returned to Boston on the sad journey to mourn Steve's death. He leaves behind his wife Yuet, a two-and-a-half-year-old son, and a circle of family, friends, and coworkers that extends across the country.

Like his father George, Steve was a storyteller. He took equal pleasure in regaling son Dain Ning (he first planned to name the baby Light) with concocted stories illustrated by a Mickey Mouse viewmaster and in shaping his scripts that transformed the Asian American experience into fantastic tales which might in one sweep combine traditional Chinese literature with the sensibilities of a rock 'n' roll generation. Born to a Chinese American mother and an immigrant father who once ran a Chinatown movie theater, Steve's ideas were informed by his community's history and inspired by his family. At the time of his death, he was working on preproduction for *Spirit of the Laundry*, an impressionistic saga about the fictional Gees. His script features a grandma who loves big time wrestling. Sister's a labor organizer-entomologist, and Dad's laundry is haunted by ghostly visions of the first Gee, one of many Chinese laborers imported to Massachusetts in the 1860s to break a strike by shoe factory workers. There are no Fu Manchus in Steve's stories.

On the activist front, Steve and Yuet have been an ever-present force in the family of Asian American media activists around the country. Born to working-class parents, they defied convention and were among the only Asian students at NYU and Columbia film schools. Together, they produced Steve's film, the poignant, comic *Freckled Rice*, a semi-autobiographical story of a boy coming to terms with his Chinese American identity during the Kennedy years. More recently, he developed scripts and, to pay the rent, crewed for Robert Altman and NYU classmate Spike Lee, as well as working on music videos and independent films—always with Dain's picture propped on the sound cart. Steve's premature death at the age of 38 is a great loss for those of us who marched with him, danced at his wedding, and waited eagerly to see his name again on the big screen.

RENEE TAJIMA

*A trust fund has been established for Dain Ning. Contributions can be sent to the Stephen C. Ning Memorial Fund, 107 Oxford St., Cambridge, MA 02138.*

**Stephen Ning and his son Dain.**

Photo: Nina Kuo




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# SCHOOL DAYS: THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF MEDIA ARTS CENTERS CONFERENCE

Martha Gever

In what has become a tradition, the nonprofit film and video clan gathered in Rochester, New York, in mid-March for the annual conference of the National Alliance of Media Arts Centers. Inclement weather—an ice storm, repeated snow storms, and the damp, cold greyness that is known in such parts as the "lake effect"—perhaps enhanced the appeal of the lengthy panel discussions and meetings of the organization's various working groups that took place at the Visual Studies Workshop over four days. The conference was attended by media center personnel from around the country, as well as others drawn by the event's theme: media and education.

An informal survey of participants, conducted as the meeting drew to a close, elicited evaluations of the event that were decidedly contradictory. Many people whom I polled deemed the conference particularly successful since it was attended by a number of people representing organizations and activities not usually found at NAMAC events—teachers and media professionals who work with elementary and secondary students, for instance. But just as many thought that the topic of media education was too narrow to attract NAMAC members whose primary work is only indirectly linked to education—e.g., exhibitors or distributors. Ever since NAMAC's decision three and a half years ago to structure their annual conference around a specific area of activity—last year's theme was exhibition—the tension between specialization and broader interests has been apparent. To some degree, the roster of attendees this year reflected this problem, since representatives of several high-profile media arts organizations were notably absent.

However, as VSW executive director and conference coordinator Nathan Lyons pointed out, the 190 or so registrants for the 1989 meeting was slightly larger than the attendance at the organization's past few conferences. Those with no immediate interest in the topic of media education used the opportunity to conduct business and compare notes with media center colleagues. Conference participants were also treated to a tour of the newly constructed offices, research facilities, and storage vaults of the International Museum of Photography/George Eastman House film collection—one of the largest archives in the world—as well as an evening program highlighting IMP/GEH's film preservation efforts, hosted by the museum's film curator, Jan-Christopher Horak. And those who preferred to watch contemporary tapes and films instead of listening to panel discussions could drop in on screenings of the second annual National Student Film and Video Festival, programmed by VSW to coincide with the conference.

One panel discussion that received uniformly good notices from conferees dealt with "Video Distribution: Opportunity for Independent Producers?" The question mark in the title proved especially appropriate, given the tenor of the panelists' remarks. For example, Linda Gibson, a video artist who works as director of media production and distribution at Middlesex County College in New Jersey, offered the assembled audience a detailed description of the labyrinth of film/video purchasing policies at upper level educational institutions. After explaining the environment as one in which textbook publishers are becoming videocassette producers and the PBS logo functions as a consumer seal of approval, Gibson listed various tactics that nonprofit distributors and media centers can employ to overcome the ignorance and inertia of faculty members who might buy or rent the films and tapes they handle. Among these were holding preview screenings for faculty, cosponsoring screenings with campus groups, and including media acquisitions professionals on the organization's board of directors.

Similarly, Margaret Cooper, a member of the New Day distribution collective, recited a raft of statistics concerning the proliferation of small format video in elementary and secondary school libraries. To emphasize the importance of this development, she pointed out, "Virtually all media used in schools—80,000 public schools with 45 million students and one million teachers—is VHS." But, she added, "the role of independently produced media in the schools is dismal at best." In order to affect this situation she counselled distributors of independent films and tapes to educate teachers, librarians, and other responsible for media purchases and rentals about work related to new and emerging curricula; global issues like North-South relations, multicultural studies, and AIDS were several topics on her list.

In addition to providing lively, informative presentations, this panel sparked some debate. In the context of a discussion about library policies and prospects for promoting independent work in that arena, Virgil Grillo, director of the Rocky Mountain Film Center, mentioned the Video Classics project initiated by the MacArthur Foundation last year. MacArthur has underwritten some of the costs of duplicating and distributing a collection of 200 hours of programs that have aired on the Public Broadcasting Service. So far, 2,200 libraries have received the $7,000 package, although MacArthur underwrote the cost for more than half of the participating institutions. All of these libraries are now eligible to receive an additional 23 tapes, the MacArthur Library, for free. Two-thirds of the tapes in that group, Grillo said, are independently-produced works. Several panel members voiced criticism of the project, however. Gibson questioned the effect of the series which, in one case she knew about, consumed half of a library system's media acquisition budget for an entire year. Panel moderator Larry Daressa of California Newsreel recalled a discussion with a librarian who told him that, rather than purchasing a tape from his organization, the library was waiting "to obtain the free tapes from MacArthur."

An unofficial theme at the conference was the reorganization of the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers and its role in the institution of the Independent Production Service mandated by Congress in the Public Telecommunications Act of 1988 (for a report on developments in that arena, see "Media Clips," p. 4). The introductory plenary session on Sunday morning was devoted to these matters, which were outlined for conference participants by Julie Mackaman from the Film Arts Foundation, National Coalition co-chairs Larry Daressa and Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers executive director Lawrence Sapadin, Bay Area Video Center executive director David Bolt, and Larry Hall, who has coordinated the National Coalition's legislative strategies for the past two years. Bolt later presided over a meeting of constituents of the National Coalition, followed by a meeting of the NAMAC advocacy working group, which together occupied much of Monday afternoon. During the latter portion of the session, the working group discussed and ratified a proposed resolution that reaffirmed NAMAC's support of the Coalition in its current negotiations with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The closing membership meeting on Tuesday morning unanimously recommended that the NAMAC board of directors endorse the resolution.

Much of the business conducted by NAMAC's Third World Caucus at the annual meeting likewise concerned the Independent Production Service and related public television funding, specifically the $3.8-million designated for minority programming in the legislative language that accompanied the act. The caucus met several times during the conference, and at the Monday afternoon session Eduardo Garcia of New Liberty Productions and Margaret Caples of the Community Film Workshop presented National Coalition representatives with a position paper that urged the inclusion of Latinos, Asian Americans, African Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans at all levels of development and implementation of the new service. In addition, they recommended that the IPS "determine [its] relationship with existing CPB-designated minority consortia." Later, at the NAMAC membership meeting, Luz Castillo from Cine Acción reported on other topics addressed by the Third World Caucus. Stating that the inclusion of Third World issues and communities within various conference panels was commendable, she conveyed the caucus' recommendation that future conferences include panels that specifically address race and communities of color.

The final session also provided NAMAC board members, spokespeople for groups, and individuals an opportunity to make announcements and voice recommendations for future activities. In addition to organization business, such as a notice of a new corporate membership category (with annual dues of $1,000), several comments and suggestions for future action came from the floor. Dee Davis from Appalshop argued for greater involvement for the membership in issues of public policy relevant to independent media, citing the funding practices and levels of NEA Media Program as a topic that might benefit from scrutiny by NAMAC members. And in the closing moments of the conference, the theme of education reemerged when Kim Crabb from Kids Make Movies and New York independent producer David Lasday announced the formation of a new organization: the National Youth Media Alliance, formed "to establish a national network to develop and advocate the integration of media by and for youth in the classroom and alternative sites for learning."

A consortium of Boston media organizations has promised to host the 1990 NAMAC conference, which has been slated to highlight production. However, the suggestion to change the topic to advocacy circulated at the Rochester event—due to the interest evident at this year's conference. Then someone at the membership meeting noted that 1990 will mark NAMAC's tenth anniversary and suggested that "the future" might be an appropriate theme. If the financial crisis facing the Massachusetts Arts Council, detailed in this month's "Media Clips" column, represents a trend for public funding agencies, a discussion of all three topics may be in order.


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# STATES RIGHTS: HUMANITIES COUNCILS CONTRACTS



**A photograph of newly freed slaves, from Kathe Sandler's *A Question of Color*. She received a grant for the film from the Alabama Humanities Foundation—but with a few strings attached.**

Courtesy Schomberg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library

Renee Tajima

Nothing comes free, as independent filmmaker Kathe Sandler realized last August when awarded a $2,000 grant from the Alabama Humanities Foundation for her project *A Question of Color*. Language in the grant contract required "submission of 3 copies of the film for educational use (non-broadcast)." When Sandler questioned the meaning of this ambiguous clause, she was told that the foundation wanted nonexclusive rental distribution rights within the state of Alabama in exchange for her grant. Sandler's experience underscores the importance of reading the fine print on what many producers regard as pro forma legal agreements with government funding agencies.

The AHF is not the only state humanities council that requires copies of funded projects for its own use. According to Marjorie Berlincourt, director of the Division of State Humanities Programs at the National Endowment for the Arts, federal policy requires that funded projects be made available for public humanities programs. However, specific interpretations and guidelines of this policy vary from state to state and are determined by each council's board of directors. Three contracts I read—from the California Council for the Humanities (CCH), the Humanities Foundation of West Virginia, and my own contract with the New York Council on the Humanities (NYCH)—used similar language that reserved nonexclusive license, without payment, for the state council and United States Government to use and reproduce products of the grant, including copyrighted material, for noncommercial purposes. Each required the filmmaker to deposit one or more copies of the project with the council upon its completion.

Strictly read, these requirements may mean competitive distribution and price undercutting by state humanities councils in the bread and butter educational market. In regional markets with high levels of activity, like California or New York, such a scenario could pose serious problems for independents who receive grants. But many states confine their exercise of these rights to archival use. NYCH requests a copy for its free, in-house video viewing library, which is open to the public. They also sponsor and package a touring program, the Films in the Humanities, in which selected documentary filmmakers—all funded by the council—participate voluntarily and receive income. Producers travel with their films to nonprofit cultural institutions around the state and are paid a flat fee of $250 per appearance. According to Caitlin Croughan, the associate director of CCH, producers funded in California are required to make their films and tapes reasonably available to the council on a "good faith and cooperative arrangement." But, she points out, the CCH is not in the business of distributing media and does not operate a resource center, as do other states.

The Alabama Humanities Foundation requirements go much further. Through its Discovery! program, media projects funded by the council are made available to nonprofit organizations and institutions in Alabama for a rental fee of $10 to $40. The program has its own catalogue and is publicized throughout the state. It is aimed at venues "without access to academic and cultural resources." Sandler was concerned that her overall distribution efforts could be jeopardized, given distributors' penchant for exclusive contracts, and that AHF's requirements were far out of line with the size of the grant in relation to the project budget. She spent several months attempting to renegotiate the terms of the contract with AHF, enlisting the support of the New York Foundation for the Arts and the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, among others. But the AHF refused to budge, stating that the contract was nonnegotiable.

Ultimately, Sandler decided to accept AHF's terms, after being assured by distributors that the Discover! usage would have little impact, given the sparse distribution activity in Alabama. Robert Stewart, executive director of AHF, asserts that the lack of distribution activity is the very reason for Discover! Says Stewart, "For rural states, the distribution network is so poor, this is a way to reach grassroots groups and stimulate programming." But AHF's failure to make clear the specific conditions of the grant up front may have obscured its good intentions. And it behooves producers to pay attention to the terms of their grant agreements, however routine they may seem, in order to make an informed decision, as Sandler did.

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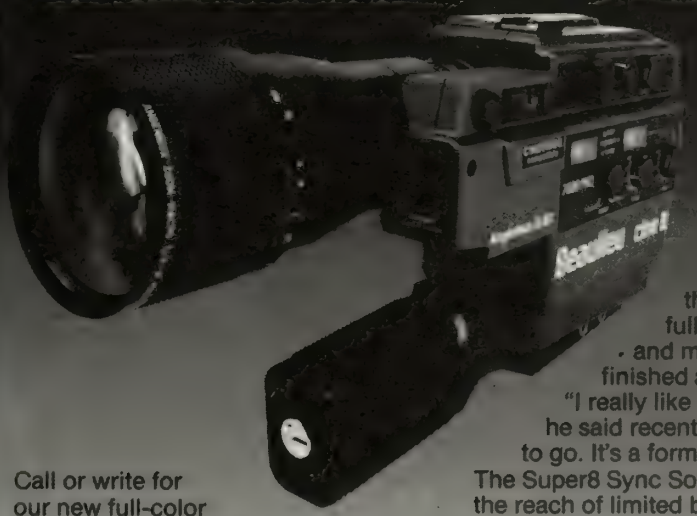
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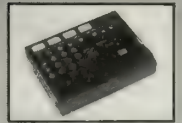
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# INNOCENTS ABROAD

## JOY PERETHS TALKS ABOUT FOREIGN MARKETS

Renee Tajima and Patricia Thomson

Joy Pereths has been active in film distribution since 1969. For the past four years she has worked at the International Film Exchange (IFEX), where she is senior vice president of international sales and acquisitions. Pereths handles the marketing and licensing of films on a territory-by-territory basis, and also is in charge of acquiring films. Her position entails frequent trips to film festivals and markets, a constant watch on the field through the trade papers, and steady contact with producers and distributors.

IFEX distributes films and television programming to markets in this country and abroad, and handles work from a variety of countries. For more than 25 years, IFEX has worked with the Soviet Union's film bureau, Sovexportfilm, and distributes such feature films as *Commissar* and *Little Vera*. A new IFEX project is the representation of the Koliba Film Studios of Czechoslovakia. The company also holds an annual IFEX East/West Film Market, which this year follows on the heels of the American Film Market in California.

IFEX also represents work from the United States, Australia, Europe, and Britain. The company currently handles over 30 British features from Film Four International, Channel Four's film production division, including *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Wish You Were Here*. IFEX licenses worldwide rights for the Public Broadcasting Service series *American Playhouse* and also a small selection of independent documentaries, such as *Best Boy* and *The Houses Are Full of Smoke*.



Joy Pereths, senior vice president of international sales and acquisitions at International Film Exchange.

Prior to her work with IFEX, Pereths cofounded Affinity Enterprises in 1980, a company specializing in international film sales, which represents films by such directors as John Sayles, Susan Seidelman, Stephen Frears, and Mike Leigh. In 1979, she was one of the founders of the Independent Feature Project Market, the first event in the United States designed specifically for the marketing of U.S. independent films.

This interview took place on February 9, 1989, in Pereth's office in New York City. Pereths spoke with Renee Tajima, associate editor of *The Independent*, who also coproduced and codirected *Who Killed Vincent Chin?*, and *The Independent*'s managing editor Patricia Thomson.

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**Renee Tajima:** How do you make a determination about what to represent? By gut feelings?

**Joy Pereths:** Through experience, instinct, comparison with similar recent films. I also try to figure out what the ancillary value of a film may be overseas, which helps to gauge theatrical value.

**Patricia Thomson:** On the panel at FIVF's seminar on film festivals in 1987, you said you'd worked with shorts and documentaries for about 10 years, then five to seven years ago made a transition to feature films because that's where the market was going. Has that trend continued in the past five years—that there's greater difficulty in finding foreign markets for shorts and documentaries?

**JP:** To be accurate—I still work with some theatrical documentaries like *Atomic Cafe* and *Koyaanisqatsi*, which are exceptions to the rule. They're hip, with pop value, and can do very well overseas.

**PT:** I've heard that some filmmakers might be wise to just skip trying to get overseas theatrical distribution and go straight to television, because there's no way to make any money on it.

**JP:** The same can be said in this country. The rules of thumb are the same here as anywhere else. One difference is that certain independent films that are acceptable here—because they are parochial—won't travel overseas because there's no cultural connection. Another factor may be that there's not a well-defined theatrical market for small films in certain countries. In Korea or Taiwan, say, they don't want to see cutting-edge, small U.S. independent films. They might invite them to the Hong Kong Film Festival, but they don't have a well-established commercial art market.

**PT:** *Variety* recently reported that theatrical sales overseas were up by 22 percent for the major studios in 1988. However, distributors of independent films were having a tough time last year and theatrical sales slumped. Is it a long-term trend?

**JP:** I don't think so. There's really no definite pattern to the overseas theatrical success of independent movies—unless you're talking about genre, horror, low-budget independent American stuff abroad, which is harder to see theatrically today than a year ago—with exceptions like the *Nightmare on Elm Street* movies. If you mean the sort of quality, cutting-edge independent films released theatrically overseas, it's always been hit or miss. You can't predict how they will do abroad, just as you can't predict how they will do here.

**RT:** How do you determine what's likely to be successful overseas? By festival response? By how they do here in the U.S.?



***Little Vera*, by Soviet director Vasily Pichul, startled audiences in the USSR with its depiction of sex, drugs, holliganism, and rock 'n' roll. Like the large majority of Soviet feature films seen in this country, *Little Vera* is distributed by IFEX.**

Courtesy IFEX

**JP:** In the independent low-budget sector, festivals can be an indication. But they're no more than an indication. A film that has a terrific buzz in Cannes may or may not succeed at the box office in a different territory. Because each country has a distinct audience with distinct film-going habits.

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**PT:** Who's buying U.S. independent work right now? Where are there markets that might not have existed a couple of years ago?

**JP:** The Far East and Japan have become a much more important markets for independent American products, quite astonishingly so.

**RT:** TV?

**JP:** No, not TV. Home video and theatrical. In my experience it's very difficult to sell independently-produced U.S. programs to Japanese television.

**RT:** Why is that?

**JP:** Culturally, they're traditionally inward looking. At least that's true for television, which is still state-run. They're much more open to theatrical and video sales. It's very interesting. This may have to do with the vertical integration of some of the big corporations who have a lot of money to spend on marketing and have diversified their business operations. For example, huge companies may manufacture not only the video hardware but they may also own shopping malls, publish magazines, and own advertising agencies. So they look for ways to cross-fertilize their profits. Sometimes they promote video through sophisticated, beautifully produced fan magazines devoted to video. They frequently do brilliant, high-profile marketing that actually enhances a secondary theatrical release.

**PT:** In Japan Hollywood films are very popular. Are independent films?

**JP:** Yes, but mostly among very young audiences in a few major cities. Of course, there have been tremendous successes, relatively speaking—films like *Smithereens* and Jim Jarmusch's work. I've sold a lot of U.S. independent films over the last few years to Japan. The young people in Japan are very hip, and they love New York. They're crazy for it. So Japan is an important market.

**PT:** What about China, Hong Kong, Taiwan?

**JP:** China is buying a lot of material, but not half-hour political documentaries, as one might expect. They're buying programs from the major networks. They're buying commercial stuff; they buy Disney; they buy westerns. And they pay very little. Unless you have a great volume to sell, it's not worth it, in my opinion. If you are selling many programs or films, I'm sure it *is*, as a long-term investment.

**RT:** What about Hong Kong or Taiwan?

**JP:** Last year Taiwan's buying power increased dramatically, but they're looking for action films for video.

**PT:** I've heard that Hong Kong only has two art cinemas.

**RT:** Then the only real money markets would be Western Europe or Japan?

**JP:** Are we talking about TV or feature films for theatrical distribution? Theatrically, Australia is a good market also, but television is tough for all but big theatrical successes—except for SBS, the network for specialized and foreign language programming. They pay relatively little, though.

**RT:** How about Canada?

**JP:** Canada is an interesting market theatrically. As for television, they give priority to Canadian programming and for Québec television you have to have dubbed versions.

**RT:** Do you have to deliver French dubs?

**JP:** Yes, if you want to sell to Radio Québec. They do not pay for the dub. They have their own pay cable television, which is a healthy market. But it's very difficult to sell directly to television. You really need to sell all the rights to a Canadian distributor, and the Canadian distributor will make those sales.

**RT:** How about theatrical sales in Canada?

**JP:** I consider Canada to be an excellent market. Demographically, it's much smaller than the United States, but it's a steady market. I nearly always sell separately to Canada. Many, many U.S. producers, or rather their U.S. distributors, say, "We'll buy domestic rights from you," and they include Canada.

**PT:** In general, television has been one of the more fruitful markets for U.S. independents abroad. What do you think the changes in European broadcasting might mean for independent producers—the increase of privately-owned stations, some state-supported stations also going into private hands and, of course, all the satellite channels that are starting up?

**JP:** The signs are very mixed. On one hand, the deregulation of the broadcasting industry throughout Europe, leading to a plethora of pay-television or satellite-delivered advertising-supported programming entities, seems to be an opportunity for strictly mainstream American programming. On the other hand, entities like Channel Four and the BBC will continue to acquire independent product of note. I doubt Channel Four's programming mandate will shift that much. Although it may shift somewhat and they may have more sports or more mini-series, they will—they must—continue. That is their *raison d'etre*, and they have developed an audience.

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*American Playhouse* programs are among the many U.S. productions sold abroad by IFEX. Here, Meredith Baxter Birney and David Birney star in Mark Twain's short story, *The Diaries of Adam and Eve.*

Courtesy American Playhouse



**PT:** What about the Soviet Union? At the Leningrad International Non-Feature Film Festival and at the American Film Market last year some Soviet film officials said that they're interested in U.S. documentaries. Have you seen any evidence of this?

**JP:** Frankly, I haven't. There is interest, but they're overwhelmed, due to the opening up of relations with other countries. We will have to wait and let things settle first.

**PT:** There are some U.S./Soviet coproductions in the works, however. Are coproductions an avenue worth exploring by smaller independents?

**JP:** I think this is a great area of oppportunity, but you must remember that the project must be significantly interesting to the coproducer. You can't impose an extremely parochial American idea and expect a foreign entity to cofinance it. Unless there's a very strong reason.

**PT:** Let's say someone is interested in doing a coproduction. They have a subject like acid rain in the United States and in Europe. How would they go about finding coproducers in Europe? Would they take a script to the markets or festivals?

**JP:** That's one way. It can be difficult to get access to people at markets because they're inundated by everyone in the world trying to talk to them. However, you might be lucky and meet them informally. But the obvious way is to find out who the proper person within an organization is and write to them. As with other projects, it helps if you have a connection who can oil the wheels for you. Of course, it can be very helpful to work through an intermediary whose job is setting up coproductions.

**RT:** Who would that be?

**JP:** A producer's representative. You would have to shop around and find the most appropriate producer's representative who works with films or programs that are similar to yours.

**RT:** Somebody based here or in Europe?

**JP:** It's easier to work with somebody who is based where you are, but there are arguments for and against that.

**PT:** Are there directories that have listings of these people?

**JP:** I don't think so. Like everything else, you network, talk to people, and find out who's doing what. For theatrical films, there's the American Film Marketing Association. There's a directory of those people. All of them, including ourselves [at IFEX], are involved in setting up co-financing for theatrical movies. When it comes to television, MIP, MIPCOM and the Monte Carlo TV markets all have lists of registered TV buyers and coproduction executives.

**RT:** Would a producer's rep represent you exclusively? How would they be paid?

**JP:** There are many ways of working. One way is a commission, based on what's raised. Another way—depending on how many projects you're working on and if you have a very close relationship—is working on a retainer basis.

**RT:** As executive producers?

**JP:** Yes. But it depends on the individual project.

**RT:** Would they ask for distribution rights?

**JP:** They may well do that.

**PT:** Are these individuals often the same people who act as foreign sales agents?

**JP:** Very often. The terms are almost the same. That's because the foreign sales agent and the producer's representative have relationships built over many, many years. They know who's doing what to whom, and they have a kind of shorthand between the broadcasters, theatrical distributors, and so on, and themselves. They're on close terms. They socialize...all that.

**PT:** One of the most common questions asked the FIVF Festival Bureau comes from filmmakers deliberating whether it's worth going to the major markets—Cannes, Berlin, MIPCOM, Monte Carlo, and so on. What is your response?

**JP:** I think it's inappropriate for independent documentary or short film producers to go to a market like MIPCOM or the American Film Market. At these markets there's nothing but business—hard, fast, chunky business. This is not art; there are no critics; there's no opportunity to mix and meet with other filmmakers from around the world or journalists who can influence the outcome of your being there. And there's usually very little opportunity or time to have a serious discussion with a buyer, because they are there to screen one film after another. They have appointments set up with the sellers with whom they have long-standing relationships. These are short, sharp markets of four or five days. They have no time to spare. On the other hand, it's fine to go purely as an educational experience to observe how such markets work and how professional distributors operate.

For a filmmaker who has the opportunity to go to Berlin or Rotterdam—let's set Cannes aside for a moment—it's a wonderful experience to go to festivals and meet other filmmakers and film journalists, to no longer be isolated in one culture but really receive new ideas from others. That's very important. But these are not places for filmmakers to sell their films directly, unless the film is so "difficult" that a foreign sales agent is not going to be interested. Or, if you've pre-sold to Channel Four or ZDF and there's little motivation for a foreign sales agent to get involved, you may be able to pick up sales for a few thousand dollars with one or two other European TV stations. If that's the case, you *should* probably try to make those deals yourself. You'll have to take very seriously the commitment that is required to service those deals. If, on the other hand, those very key *pre*-sales have already been made through a producer's representative, he or she will continue and finish off the other follow-up sales and service them.

Cannes is something else. The only sane reason for a filmmaker to go to Cannes is if they have a narrative feature officially invited to the Competition, the Director's Fortnight, or one of the other official sections. Then they *must* be there, because they are officially required to attend in order to promote their film. If you are a feature filmmaker who is beginning to go past the very low-budget mark, and are looking for a deal for a million or two or three or four or five, *and* if you know your way around the block, *and* you're there with your foreign sales agent, the two of you can maybe cut a deal with a foreign financing source or foreign distributor. Cannes is a zoo to the uninitiated. You don't go there with a 16mm film under your arm. That is an absolute disaster.

**PT:** Are markets and festivals good places to hook up with foreign sales agents?

**JP:** Very often, when going abroad to a festival or market, a filmmaker's goal might be, "I'm not going there to make these sales myself" but rather, "I'm going to find a sales agent." This is making the assumption that your film is saleable, the territories are available, the rights are available, so that a good foreign sales agent would be motivated to sell it. Then, the goal is to find that foreign sales agent as well as meeting other foreign filmmakers, journalists, and so on.

**RT:** We've been approached by so many kinds of people for *Vincent Chin*. There are a lot of very commercial types of reps.

**JP:** You have to be very careful, because there are some sales agencies or foreign distribution companies who just seem to want to grab anything in order to enlarge their catalogue. At times, their choices make no sense, because the films they express interest in do not resemble a product that they know and work with. You need to be very careful, do your homework, get references, and ask, "Who are these people? What kind of films have they distributed before? What are they like? Do you know them? What's their reputation?"

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**RT:** Would you say most foreign sales agents have connections with all the different markets, or do they specialize in particular countries?

**JP:** All of the above. In television, you have to really know the whole world because the world is a small place. The competition for product is acute, and the marketplace can be difficult. They would only diminish their potential for revenue and profit if they said, "We only handle three territories." But there are not many companies that specialize in both theatrical worldwide film sales *and* television. The two are more often exclusive. Some people do both. I do both.

**RT:** Even with specialty films?

**JP:** Specialty narrative films are another story. I invariably sell narrative independent movies both to overseas television and theatrical. But if you're talking about documentary television programming—a product that has no theatrical sales potential—very few people do that in addition to handling independent feature film sales.

**RT:** When you sell theatrically, are you selling directly to the exhibitor?

**JP:** No. You license theatrical rights to a distributor.

**RT:** And why would a producer go through you rather than go directly to a European distributor?

**JP:** Films are sold country by country. It's enormously complicated, specialized, and labor-intensive. Producers are producers; they're not distributors. The two are quite different and require different kinds of expertise.

**RT:** What would a producer have to do if they wanted to do it on their own?

**JP:** Spend five to 10 years learning the world of overseas distribution—at least five to 10 years. They would have to take on the overhead of an infrastructure that would service distribution contracts in their entirety—the marketing and promotion and advertising requirements of each distributor in each country—for the life of the contract. They would have to take over the overhead and the expertise of specialized marketing and promotion for launching a narrative film internationally via the appropriate markets or festivals.

**RT:** Will some distributors handle television and some handle theatrical?

**JP:** Usually you sell all the rights—which means theatrical, television, and home video—to one entity in one territory, because that is the fairest thing to do for them. They can protect their down side if the film fails commercially in one medium, since they have another medium through which they might be able to recoup their investment. At other times, it may not be the right strategy for a film. Those are the sorts of very subtle decisions that producers who are inexperienced cannot make for themselves, because they don't understand the ramifications. That's not their job. Their job is to produce films.

**RT:** If you're going to a foreign sales agent, should you give them the whole world? Or do you go to one person for Europe, one person for Japan?

**JP:** I would *not* do that. That would be a nightmare. You would be dealing with six different individuals with six different agency agreements, and they would split up the market. I don't think it's to anyone's advantage to do that.

**RT:** Not even, let's say, a split between Canada and Europe, on the one hand, and the Far East on the other?

**JP:** Canada is frequently—but *not* always—incorporated in a "North American" distribution arrangement. *All* other territories should be handled by one agent.

**RT:** Let's say you're a producer going to festivals and you get sales inquiries directly, which means 100 percent of the profit goes to you. What do you do?

**JP:** You pass them on to your agent. You cannot have your cake and eat it, too. You wouldn't know how to make the best deal or have the ability to service it. Just as you make your decision to find a domestic distributor who will handle all the rights in the United States, because you know they have the infrastructure and the expertise and the capital to do that and to market the film properly, so you choose your foreign sales agent and work with them.

**RT:** Do foreign distributors or TV buyers prefer talking to the producer directly because they can get away with a deal, or do they prefer working with agents?

**JP:** They're used to dealing with agents and distributors, and prefer it, because they have been frustrated by independent producers who don't follow through or don't know how to follow through, who have to run off to shoot another film and can't be found. They prefer to deal with an entity that they've known year-in, year-out. They know where they are, they know their fax number, they know they're going to see them at MIPCOM, and so on.

**RT:** When you handle a producer, do you generally cover all the expenses up front?

**JP:** It varies from company to company. There's no set standard procedure, and it's negotiable.

**RT:** What about the expenses entailed in attending markets?

**JP:** Normally when we go to a market, the producer supplies us and pays up front for certain things. We may pay for our personal out-of-pocket expenses, or our overhead, and recoup those expenses out of the producer's share down the line. But, say, we take out advertising in the trades. The producer will pay for that at the time that the cost is incurred. If, at the same time, we do a fax mailing to 500 buyers around the world, we will advance that expense and recoup it from the first income.

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**RT:** Let's say I'm a producer and have a small feature film that did nicely at Telluride. There's some buzz about it, it gets a favorable review from Vincent Canby, and you've picked it up. What are the steps you'd take it through?

**JP:** You have to create a launching strategy which will be different depending on the film and the timing of its launch. If a film is ready to be shown around the time of Telluride and the New York Film Festival, that's one strategy. Maybe the film isn't right for Telluride or the New York Film Festival. Maybe it's better to launch it in Toronto. If it's the spring, and there's something very special and quirky about the movie, we might decide to launch it in Berlin. Then we'll follow up at the market in Cannes. Or maybe it's such an amazing movie that it could go to Cannes officially, in which case it wouldn't go to Berlin. Or maybe it's Amy Heckerling's *Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, and it should go straight into the American Film Market as a straightforward, interesting, cutting-edge commercial movie. Each situation is individually tailored.

**RT:** What kind of rights do you need to deliver to a European or a Japanese distributor? For example, here you have to take out errors and omissions insurance.

**JP:** That's a quintessentially American requirement. You usually don't do that for overseas. But we do need proof that all clearances have been made by the copyright holder for music and so on. People are constantly amazed at the adversarial, litigious nature of the U.S. By the same token, in order to protect the producer from the general lack of trust that is inherent in the business, especially over great distances, you have to be expert at such things as opening and fulfilling irrevocable letters of credit, which are very complicated and time-consuming.



Wren (Susan Berman) suffers the indignity of eviction in Susan Seidelman's feature film *Smithereens*, which became a hit among the young and the hip in Japan.

Courtesy filmmaker

**RT:** What are those?

**JP:** An irrevocable letter of credit is a kind of escrow situation in which both the licensor and the licensee are protected through monies that are earmarked in escrow through a neutral intermediary of a bank.

**RT:** Protected from each other?

**JP:** In a way, yes. The licensor proves that all the materials agreed upon have been sent. This is done through documentary evidence—shipping documents—and must conform exactly to what's contracted. If there is one piece missing, they will not give you the money that the distributor has deposited irrevocably at the bank. The bank acts as a sort of friend to both and enemy to none. It's extremely onerous.

**RT:** Is it expensive to do this?

**JP:** No. The distributor pays, or should pay any banking fees involved.

**RT:** There are special banks that do this?

**JP:** Every commercial bank can do it. Not only films are handled in that way. You use this method whenever you are not very familiar with a distributor. Even when you are, you probably should use an irrevocable letter of credit.

**RT:** In many countries, for television you would deliver a one-inch tape.

**JP:** I'm talking about theatrical films. Television is usually much more straightforward. Up until now these have been straight-out, straight-up, "Our word is our bond" deals. It's like dealing with the government. They *always* pay—eventually. But the world is changing—with so many megalomaniac media buckaneers around. One may have to resort to letters of credit for delivering one-inch tapes from now on.

**RT:** Do you simply deliver your one-inch tape or your interpositive and internegative? Do they pay for the titling and the dubbing?

**JP:** Usually, they do their own. Many low-budget independent producers have never thought about what international standards are required for materials, because they struggle so long and hard just to raise money and get the film in the can. They're not used to thinking about the problems of international distribution, which is another reason why a producer's rep is invaluable. From the word go, a producer's rep should say, "You have to be able to deliver this, this, this, and this. So you had better put that in your budget as a line item, or you won't be able to fulfill any overseas sales."

**RT:** Are you talking about a filmmaker who's going to make a narrative at a million dollars, two million dollars?

**JP:** At any reasonable budget.

**RT:** But most of our readers are making films at $100,000 to $200,000.

**JP:** Then they shouldn't have unreal expectations. At that level, the overseas market becomes a viable market only by sheer chance, not by design. Sales may happen if the film resonates somehow in certain territories for certain reasons.

**PT:** Will a foreign sales agent be willing to talk with them?

**JP:** Yes, but they should bring the project to the sales agent while it's in development, not at the end when it's too late. No one knows how a project's going to turn out. I have never encountered anyone who refused to discuss a project with a producer. Distributors and foreign sales agents are extremely open, because they never know when the film in development is going to be the next *She's Gotta Have It*. How can they know at such an early stage, until they have an opportunity to evaluate a project? Their advice can be very, very helpful.

# Unofficial Stories

## Documentaries by Latinas and Latin American Women




*La Operación* (*The Operation*, 1982), by Puerto Rican-based filmmaker Ana Maria García, examines the common practice of sterilization of Puerto Rican women.

Courtesy Cinema Guild

Liz Kotz

The picture North Americans have of Latin American cinema—at its most militant *and* its most conventional—tends to be overwhelmingly male. Of all the well-known films that comprise what has become known as New Latin American Cinema,[1] only one available in the United States—Sara Gomez' *One Way or Another*—was directed by a woman. This perception persists, despite the diverse and growing body of work by Latin American women—including that by Latinas in North America—which has developed over the past 10 years. In the last two to three years in particular, the sheer quantity of work by such women and the increased opportunities to share contacts and experiences across national boundaries has led to an awareness of a movement that is changing the shape and the direction of New Latin American Cinema. However, outside a handful of features—*The Hour of the Star*, by Susana Amaral; *Patriamada*, by Tizuka Yamasaki; and *Camila*, by María Luisa Bemberg—this work remains all but invisible in the United States.

What little attention has been given by U.S. exhibitors and critics has focused almost exclusively on feature films. Despite some recent exceptions, entry into this sector remains limited to the "exceptional few," and the myriad short experimental and documentary films and tapes made by women have largely been generated at the margins of existing film communities—outside the government-funded film institutes and national television systems. This situation is exacerbated further by the tendency to embalm Latin American cinema in the "great directors" model of foreign cinema; witness the current popularity of *Dangerous Loves*, an internationally coproduced package of six films based on stories by Gabriel García Marquez. Such programs demonstrate the capabilities of relatively high-budget, studio-based filmmaking in Latin America. At the same time, independent film- and videomakers throughout the continent are producing a challenging and tremendously varied array of work. And, as conditions that influence and structure independent production increasingly become international issues—the polarization of mainstream and marginal cinemas, the hegemonic influence of national and international television networks, and the rapidly increasing use of video—Latin American independent media has great relevance for independent producers in this country.

These are also the sectors within which women producers, the vast majority of whom are under the age of 40 (and thus in the early stages of their careers) work. While few have become familiar names on the international film festival circuit, they engage a series of critical issues—what it means to be a bicultural filmmaker, for instance, or what it means to be a woman in a country undergoing a twentieth-century industrial revolution—which promise to expand contemporary cinematic practices, particularly in such genres as documentary.

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By examining some recent documentaries by Latin American women alongside works by Latina producers in the United States, I am not



**In *The Battle of Vieques* (1986), Zydnia Nazario uses the case of Vieques, a small Puerto Rican island, to show what happens when a military culture is imposed upon an agricultural society.**

Courtesy Cinema Guild

attempting to efface the differences between filmmaking in Latin America and the U.S. but instead hope to address the increasingly transnational nature of this activity. This approach reflects a changing cultural landscape, where a number of "immigrant cinemas" and "ethnic cinemas" have sprung up alongside more traditional "national cinemas" and where alliances among those who produce, distribute, and exhibit alternative media are forming across political borders and linguistic boundaries. While omitting many important areas of activity, this discussion will outline some of the shared interests evident in this work and situate it within emerging networks of women producers throughout Latin America, the U.S., and Canada.

In the past two years, a series of key events have helped to build recognition and momentum for this emerging "movement." In October 1987 Zafra A.C. in Mexico City hosted a festival of films and videos by Latin American women, the Cocina de Imagenes (Kitchen of Images), at the Cineteca Nacional in Mexico City.[2] As well as presenting 12 hours of work each day during the 12-day event, the festival provided a major forum and an opportunity for Latina producers to meet, become acquainted, and discuss crucial issues. Almost 100 women—over half from outside of Mexico—attended the mass one-day meeting held during the festival to explore problems and plan strategies. The simple fact that there was enough work by Latin American and Caribbean women to provide almost two weeks of programming was an eye-opener for many, while the obvious range of styles, traditions, and contexts—from made-for-TV movies to activist videotapes—exploded any preconceived ideas of what constitutes "women's filmmaking." The Cocina also resulted in the formation of a biannual publication *Boletin Cine/Video/Mujer* (edited in Canada by film scholar Zuzana Pick[3]) and preliminary plans for another festival in 1989.

Additionally, in the past few years the Festival of New Latin American Cinema in Havana has featured events that showcase the work of women filmmakers, including screenings of major films and large public forums.[4] Although some Latin Americans have questioned the central role Cuba plays in setting international agendas for Latin American film—the Havana festival, the Foundation for New Latin American Cinema, the magazine *Cine Cubano*, and the new Escuela Internacional de Cine y TV are all based in Cuba—this annual gathering provides the only regular opportunity for Latin Americans to see work from other Latin American countries. Most of the other major institutions that collect and disseminate information about Latin American cinema are based in the United States, a development that poses questions about the consequences of North American institutions setting the terms of discussion for Latin American media. Regarding work by women, these institutions have become particularly powerful, because the circuits of communication and diffusion of information based in Cuba have tended to neglect the work and concerns of women producers.

In spite of the conservative programming at most film festivals and larger exhibition venues in the U.S., some active efforts are now introducing a range of nonmainstream Latin American work to audiences here. Both the San Antonio Cine Festival and New York-based National Latino Film and Video Festival reflect the explosion of independently produced work. Projects like the *Democracy in Communication* program of Latin American popular video organized by Karen Ranucci, X-Change TV's subtitling and distribution of Central American television programs, and the Latino and Latin American components of the satellite-distributed public access series *Deep Dish TV* promise to rethink the diffusion of foreign and minority media in this country. In addition, the Punto de Vista: Latina (Point of View: Latina) series assembled by the U.S. nonprofit distribution company Women Make Movies represents a sustained commitment to acquire and subtitle current Latin American works as well as circulate a permanent collection for educational distribution nationwide.

Last October, Cine Acción, a San Francisco-based nonprofit organization of Latino and Chicano film- and videomakers sponsored the Mujeres de las Americas/Women of the Americas Film and Video Festival, which I codirected. In the course of that event we presented over 60 independently produced works by Latin American women, about one-third of which were unsubtitled and/or undistributed in the U.S. Almost a dozen filmmakers from Latin America and the East Coast met with the local film and Latino communities during the five-day event, which featured panel discussions on documentary work, Central American media, and Chicana filmmaking. And in Canada, Groupe Intervention Video has developed innovative distribution programs designed for educational and feminist audiences, expanding from its original French-language base in Québec to include English-language tapes and materials for distribution throughout the country.

At both the Cocina and the Cine Acción festival, the preponderence of documentary work was striking; over 75 percent of the films and tapes screened at both events could be placed in this category. The historical reasons for women using documentary have frequently stemmed from greater professional opportunities in television and journalism, as opposed to the notoriously male-dominated world of feature film production. Yet the vagaries of institutional sexism don't sufficiently explain why so many women are producing documentaries, since the majority of work is made without institutional support or funding. Certainly documentary work provides an important point-of-entry for beginning film/videomakers involved in collective and community organizing. Documentary can also appeal on a psychological level: When unsure of one's identity as a filmmaker, one can be grounded by—and perhaps hide behind—the demands of the subject matter. In addition, the economics of filmmaking in most countries clearly favor documentary production. In any case, documentaries in general and television journalism in particular have provided a crucial training ground for large numbers of women film- and videomakers, many of whom have used this as a springboard to work in other genres.

But there is another kind of appeal that documentary media may have for women film/videomakers in Latin America—the attraction of those people who are ignored or underrepresented in the dominant media to forms that document their own reality, culture, and perceptions. While documentaries done by women in Latin America comprise a vast field with a many different formal tendencies, a great deal of this work maintains a realist aesthetic and adheres to traditional documentary criteria for accuracy and authenticity, if not objectivity.

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The New York City-Puerto Rico film/video axis has given rise to some of



**Nereyda García Ferraz and Kate Horsfield examine the immigrant experience in *Ana Mendieta: Fuego de Tierra* (*Ana Mendieta: Fire of the Earth*, 1988), a video portrait of the life and work of the late Cuban-American artist.**

Courtesy Video Data Bank

the most cogent analyses of U.S. neocolonialism and the complex situation of women living under regimes of internal and external colonization. Two documentary films addressing Puerto Rican issues, Ana Maria García's *La Operación* (*The Operation*, 1982) and Zydnia Nazario's *The Battle of Vieques* trace the inseparability of private lives from the dynamics of international imperialism and hegemony. Likewise, both works address the status of Puerto Rico as a colony of the United States and analyze local Puerto Rican problems in relation to larger issues of U.S. racism and imperialism. García, a Cuban woman now living in Puerto Rico, directed the Cine Festival San Juan held this past October; she is currently producing *Los Roqueros y los Cocolos* (working title), a film about youth cultures based on rock and salsa music in Puerto Rico and the intersections of class and ethnicity encountered in these communities. Nazario, who works in New York as an architect, is developing a new film tentatively titled *Linking Islands*, which explores identity and language in the poetry and visual art of various Puerto Rican artists living on and outside the island.

Released in 1982 and used extensively in political organizing and educational settings, *La Operación* was a founding work of Latin American women's cinema. The chilling documentary examines the practice of mass sterilization of Puerto Rican women—a practice so common that it is simply known as "la operación." In doing so, it presents a ground-breaking reformulation of feminist politics of the body and reproduction. Weaving interviews and historical analysis with graphic scenes on the operating table, the film exposes the imposition of this practice of population control on the Puerto Rican people and suggests how it was subsequently imposed on poor women of color living in the United States.

*The Battle of Vieques* (1986) also deals with colonialism—specifically the U.S. militarization of the small Puerto Rican island of Vieques and the subsequent destabilization of the islanders' lives and livelihoods. After the military usurped most of the land on the island, destroying the local economy, the Viequenses took up fishing. NATO bombing raids subsequently damaged the coastal ecology and made this work too dangerous. Now, residents are faced with a choice between work in U.S.-based, hi-tech and munitions industries or emigration.

Incorporating extensive archival footage, *The Battle of Vieques* describes the history of the island, which lies southeast of the Puerto Rican mainland, as a strategic naval base that has become a gateway to U.S. military operations in the Caribbean and Central America. In the film, Nazario reveals the conflicts produced when a militaristic culture is introduced into an agricultural society. In one scene, island fishermen enact a David and Goliath struggle against U.S. warships. Elsewhere, a Puerto Rican band is shown playing *The Star Spangled Banner* at a naval ceremony; off-key and listless, the performers seem bored and uncomfortable. In interview segments, islanders argue about the expanding role of the U.S. military in their society and discuss problems of unemployment that make the Navy's presence attractive to some.

*The Battle of Vieques* and *La Operación* both chart the complex power relations and permeable borders between First and Third Worlds. These films represent works of an explicitly Puerto Rican immigrant cinema—works posed on the edge between two cultures, addressing both English-speaking and Spanish-speaking audiences. They also marked a shift in North American awareness of Latino filmmaking, which in the seventies had focused on the emerging Chicano cinema movement. (The San Antonio Cine Festival, for instance, originally served as a forum for Chicano film, but quickly moved to incorporate work from Latin America and other Latino cultures in the U.S.) This work—and its complex position as both an "ethnic" and "immigrant" cultural practice—engages issues of address, audience, and interlinguality in a rapidly changing context of neocolonial relations.

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Another tendency in media made by Latin American women is the integration of documentary and fictional forms, which can be seen in fiction films that use documentary footage and techniques[5] as well as such documentaries as *La Mirada de Myriam* (*Myriam's Glance*, dir. Clara Riascos/Cine Mujer, Colombia, 1986), which incorporates reenactments, flashbacks, and fictional elements, along with documentary sequences. Recognizing the complex relationships between women's external and internal realities, biographical and autobiographical works like *Diario Inconcluso* (*Unfinished Diary*, dir. Marilu Maillet, Canada/Chile, 1983) and *Ana Mendieta: Fuego de Tierra* (*Ana Mendieta: Fire of the Earth*, dir. Nereyda García Ferraz and Kate Horsfield, USA, 1988) entail a multi-leveled reworking of the ways documentaries organize and present information.

A mix of documentary, autobiography, and personal diary, *Diario Inconcluso* is a sometimes ambiguous and disorienting depiction of the life of a Chilean woman living in Montréal. The film delves into the personal experience of exile and loss, employing documentary and fictional elements that depart from a realist documentary aesthetic in order to impart a visceral sense of confusion and grief. A disturbing and often painful work, *Diario Inconcluso* follows the filmmaker as she enacts the routines of her daily life: discussions with her mother, a visit with Chilean friends, an argument with her Australian husband, and her work at a TV studio. Alternating between French, English, and Spanish, language becomes a battleground of identity, as the filmmaker raises a child in a country she herself can never call home.

García and Horsfield's tape *Ana Mendieta: Fuego de Tierra*, which was coproduced with Branda Miller, is a video portrait that recounts the life and work of the late Cuban-American artist. Produced to accompany a retrospective exhibition of Mendieta's sculpture and performance documents, the tape explores the politics and emotions that shaped her unusual and syncretic art. Although García and Horsfield avoid the subject of Mendieta's highly publicized and still unresolved death in 1985, they develop a complex reconstruction of memory and loss in an attempt to come to terms with Mendieta's powerful personal and artistic legacy. The video constructs a series of fragmented perceptions that follow the continuities and discontinuities in Mendieta's life: born in Cuba, sent to live in the U.S. as a child soon after the Cuban revolution, Mendieta ended up in an orphanage in the Midwest, hopelessly out-of-place and separated from her family and any emigré/exile community. Photographs from her childhood and adolescence; reminiscensces by family members, former teachers, and colleagues; and Mendieta's own stunning documentation of her performances and



***Mulheres Negras* (*Black Women*, 1985), on racism and racial identity in Brazil, is one of several "collective portraits" produced by Lilith Video, a group based in São Paolo.**

Courtesy Women Make Movies

installations constitute the collage portrait. Like Maillet's film, García and Horsfield's tape suggests the collisions and disjunctures of immigrant experience, belonging to two worlds and yet not entirely at home in either. This effect is underlined in interviews with members of the arts communities in New York and Havana, who describe how Mendieta's interest in rebuilding cultural ties with Cuba reflected a deeply personal quest for connection.

An equally dense and imaginative work grappling with contemporary problems of biographical filmmaking, *La Mirada de Myriam*, by the Colombian collective Cine Mujer,[6] explores shifts in identity—the deep changes in what it means to be a woman—in a rapidly and often chaotically industrializing country. Like their earlier film *Carmen Carrascal* (dir. Eulalia Carrizosa, 1984), *La Mirada de Myriam* portrays a poor woman who overcomes fierce obstacles to build a creative and satisfying life. At first, the film appears to be a conventional documentary about a single mother building a life as a squatter in the outskirts of Bogotá. But this initial impression is challenged and extended by dramatic recreations of the protagonist's childhood memories and fears, including a mystical sequence in which a rural healer cures Myriam's "evil eye." The director, Clara Riascos explains:

> *La Mirada de Myriam* was a project that was started by Myriam herself. Myriam Ramirez is in her early thirties, a single mother with three kids, who lives in a outlying barrio of Bogotá. She is a very sensitive woman with a very sad past who developed an inner strength and imagination that have enabled her to struggle to overcome the obstacles that had condemned her to poverty. There was a certain magical element in this. After having had a sad, very abusive childhood, she is now a protector of the kids. She started a day-care service in her neighborhood and learned how to run it herself.

Although perhaps best known in the U.S. for their earlier humorous feminist short *Y Que Hace Su Mama?* (*What Does Your Mother Do?*, 1983), in *La Mirada de Myriam* Cine Mujer departs from their previous cinematic strategy, which contested women's oppression through realist representations, and develops more indirect and provocative techniques to elaborate the complexity of women's private and public lives. This approach engages traditional elements of storytelling and fantasy to explore the psychological dimensions of empowerment and transformation. Grounded in the daily concerns of poor women, the film nonetheless provides powerful analyses of social dynamics and political issues.

An alternate approach to the problem of biography—how to convey the changing and conflicting aspects of female identity—is posed by the "collective portraits" produced by Lilith Video. Lilith, a women's video collective in São Paolo, Brazil, has produced several short documentaries, including *Mulheres Negras* (*Black Women*, dir. Silvana Afram, 1985) about racism and racial identity in Brazil; *Beijo na Boca* (*Kiss on the Mouth*, dir. Jacira Melo, 1987), composed of interviews with prostitutes in São Paolo's Boca do Lixo district; and *Mulheres no Canavial* (*Women in the Cane Fields*, dir. Silvana Afram, 1987), which profiles various rural women who cut cane. Each of these tapes combines multiple interviews in order to represent the range of experiences, thoughts, and feelings within specific groups of marginalized women. Jacira Melo, a member of Lilith, has described the interrelation of formal experimentation with the documentary material:

> You have so much freedom with video to develop approaches and discover a rhythm that suits the material, since video has so little tradition. For example, our work *Mulheres no Canavial*, made in a rural area with women who cut cane, has a different rhythm than projects we shot in the city. It was an attempt to make a work very close to the rhythm of these women's lives. They have a very different pace of moving, of talking, a different rhythm of expressing themselves. I think that these questions of pacing, language, and form mean a constant search for each subject.[8]

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As Latin American women have become increasingly active in political organizing, often taking the lead in countries where traditional forms of radical protest have been coopted or eliminated through repression, several documentary films have covered the development of these movements and their efforts to articulate political agendas outside of traditional power structures. Both *We're Not Asking for the Moon* (dir. Mari Carmen de Lara, Mexico, 1986) and *Las Madres: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo* (dir. Susana Muñoz and Lourdes Portillo, USA, 1986) address an emerging political subject—in the first case, a new union of Mexico City seamstresses, and in the second, the mothers and grandmothers of Argentineans who were killed, imprisoned, or "disappeared" during the military dictatorship. Made to inform both local organizing and international support campaigns, these films exhibit strikingly different forms of address, although both attempt to mobilize and sustain popular memory in ways that overcome institutional silence and repression.

*We're Not Asking for the Moon* documents the formation of the independent seamstresses' union in the wake of the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City. Made as an organizing film, *We're Not Asking for the Moon* was originally produced for the seamstresses union with their cooperation. Whereas most First World news organizations framed the earthquake in the clichéd and ahistorical discourses of natural disaster and human tragedy, de Lara's film examines the politics of the destruction and its aftermath by juxtaposing interviews with the seamstresses and their families with the official interpretation of events given by government spokesmen and Mexican television. As the film progresses, it engages a whole network of local "cultural knowledges" (to use the formulation by British critic Paul Willemen[9]) that allow the viewer to situate events within contemporary Mexican history. At times, this technique may hinder understanding of the film for foreign viewers unable to read the complex political landscapes and the histories they draw upon. However, the absence of an explanatory narrative functions very effectively to insert the viewer into the experiences of chaos, grief, and confusion as the magnitude of the disaster and the obstacles to the seamstresses' efforts unfold.

De Lara organizes information and material to reveal the conflicting forces and tensions that underlie the events she depicts and thus evokes a dense history of political institutions, resistance, and repression. For in-



**Mexican director Mari Carmen de Lara documents the formation of a new union of seamstresses in the wake of the 1985 earthquake in *We're Not Asking for the Moon* (1986).**

Courtesy First Run/Icarus

stance, in one segment she intermixes shots of state-sponsored May Day celebrations in the Plaza de la Constitución—an homage to the government's cooptation of the "recognized" unions—and shots of the seamstresses demonstrating and being attacked by police. This sequence juxtaposes two relationships between state power and workers' organizations, emphasizing in the process the threat that the independent women's organization poses to both traditional union hierarchies and unresponsive government bureaucracies. In addition to the specific historical meanings implicit in this scene, it provides a deft representation of relations of power in a society where many historical bases of opposition have been effectively incorporated into the centralized political structure of Mexico's largest political party, the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party), which has consistently repressed independent political movements.

*We're Not Asking for the Moon* has become an important and controversial piece in Mexico, and de Lara, a graduate of the Centro Universitario de Estudios Cinematographicos (the Mexico City film school), is now working on two other projects: a collectively produced documentary on environmental concerns and a dramatized/recreated documentary on political prisoners and terrorism in Mexico. Her films represent some of the excellent work being done by a younger generation of filmmakers who, rather than aligning themselves with the state-sponsored film apparatus (which is currently just about bankrupt and subject to widespread state censorship), are taking important roles in Mexico's changing political landscape. In search of fresh approaches and new audiences for independent film, many of these women are working in narrative forms—for instance, the highly innovative short fiction film by Maria Novaro, *An Island Surrounded by Water* (1986), which employs hand-tinted images and poetic personal filmmaking devices to tell the story of a girl whose mother has left to join a guerrilla movement in the interior of the country.

Both Mari Carmen de Lara and Lourdes Portillo are concerned with how their films help to construct a popular memory—reinvoked in times of crisis. And both the mothers in Argentina and the seamstresses' union in Mexico City have used documentary films to convey information as well as to provide inspiration. Discussing specific uses of *We're Not Asking for the Moon*, de Lara states,

> We trained garment makers to be projectionists, because the main reason for the film was to help the union get more members. What's most important is for the film to have a practical application. Also, when split over some issue, recently, they sat down and watched the film and recovered their mission and unity.[10]

The tactic of engaging local "cultural knowledges" to shape an activist film, used so effectively in *We're Not Asking for the Moon*, poses a problem in works of "immigrant cinemas" like the films made by Portillo and Susana Muñoz. Muñoz, an Argentinean who lived in Israel before coming to the United States, and Portillo, who grew up in Mexico and moved to the U.S. as a teenager, live in San Francisco. Unlike the dense national consciousness embedded in de Lara's and Novaro's films, Portillo and Muñoz' collaborations *Las Madres* and their more recent *La Ofrenda* (*The Offering*, 1989) address a lack of shared awareness/information between filmmaker and audience and thus broach the problem of constituting an audience for immigrant cinema. In *Las Madres* the task was to make the private anguish and political struggle of the Argentinean mothers and grandmothers comprehensible to a North American and international audience that was not, when the film was produced, very familiar with the plight of the *desaparecidos* and their families. Concerning audience, Portillo explains, "The film wasn't made for the mothers but for the rest of the world. But it's had such a success that even the mothers use it now to rekindle interest."

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At the Cine Acción festival, Portillo reflected on her position as the maker of immigrant cinema, in contrast to most of the Latin American participants whose work, however marginal, addresses a national audience. She discussed the problems of trying to recuperate her relationship to her own cultural heritage and of attempting to explain that culture to a foreign—Anglo-U.S.—culture. This becomes a central concern in *La Ofrenda*, which examines the observance of Day of the Dead ceremonies in Mexico and San Francisco, where the tradition had died out and was reintroduced largely by the Chicano arts community in the 1970s. What is the fate, the filmmakers seem to ask, of folk customs in a diaspora culture? Whereas the Mexican observances are imbued with spontaneity and a lack of self-consciousness about indigenous ritual celebrations, the San Francisco scenes suggest nostalgia. Unlike the Oaxacans who describe practices handed down by *abuelitas* and community memory, the Chicanos who speak in the film analyze their involvement in Day of the Dead rituals and the role it plays in their lives. The film implies that, having been lost, culture is something that must be recovered, rediscovered, taught, and explained.

This tension is reflected in the film's structure, which employs extensive narration to explain the Mexican practices and their history to audiences in the U.S. At work recutting the voiceover as this article went to press, Muñoz and Portillo expressed frustration with the need to translate, explain, and provide basic information. Without a social and historical context, they feared that the Mexican footage would become just another set of pretty, exotic images for consumption. But too much historical background distances and potentially dilutes philosphical issues about duality and death raised in the film. Funded by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and slated for broadcast on public TV, *La Ofrenda* illustrates some of the problems entailed in making immigrant cinema for a mainstream audience: how to present immigrant/ethnic cultural practices without becoming caught in the sets of viewing conventions—"exoticism" and "education"—reserved for other cultures; how to present images of Mexico that resist incorporation into the representations of that culture already developed by mainstream media.

A very different approach to such questions is taken in the unusual found-footage documentary *From Here, From This Side* (1988), by Mexican videomaker Gloria Ribe, which presents a powerful essay on North-South relations. Made from clips of U.S. and Mexican films and television—all "borrowed" and rephotographed—the videotape addresses the power relations between "central" and "peripheral" countries. Ribe's assemblage of overdetermined images and materials graphically demonstrates how these relations structure cultural discourses. At the same time she refuses any claim to cultural authenticity; instead, the tape explores the places assigned by these discourses and the world that they construct.

Ribe's earlier videotape *Tepito* (1987) used conventional documentary




**Muñoz and Portillo's recent collaboration, *La Ofrenda* (*The Offering*, 1989), documents Day of the Dead ceremonies in Mexico and San Francisco, examining the fate of folk culture in a diaspora culture.**

Courtesy filmmakers

techniques to portray a historic working-class neighborhood in Mexico City, but *From Here, From This Side* marks her growing frustration with the such strategies—the attempt to "capture" reality with interviews and provide yet more information "capsules" to a TV-soaked culture. One reason Ribe cites for her choice is the considerable time and money required by "pure" documentary filmmaking and the irony of interviewing people in order to record statements that are predetermined. Speaking at the Cine Acción festival, Ribe joked, "Maybe realism is one of the biggest fictions ever created."

In part, her found-footage technique also responds to the traditional position constructed by documentary film in relation to Third World subjects. Ribe noted how, by concentrating on Third World misery, documentaries tend to reproduce a construction of the Third World as "victim." Viewing Mexican television as official and closed to dissent, she proposes her technique as a means

> to change the victimness of the Third World personage. On TV, you have fragments of reality without anything making sense of them. You take them like a pill every morning — that's why they're called capsules—and we overdose on these pills.

Ribe's concerns and strategies resonate sharply with many First World critical practices, and her work has received considerable attention in the independent video community in the U.S., giving it a certain "crossover" status. In addition to screenings at last year's International Public Television Conference in Philadelphia and the Cine Acción festival, *From Here, From This Side* was included in the American Film Institute's 1988 National Video Festival and subsequently exhibited in San Francisco at New Langton Arts—not a venue known for its attention to Latino or Third World media.

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Both *La Ofrenda* and *From Here, From This Side* suggest interesting questions about the borders of New Latin American Cinema and the appropriation and reappropriation of cultural practices, images, and discourses. Both North and South America are sites of unprecedented flows of populations and cultural practices—especially in mass media. A major influence on these developments is U.S. mass media, which saturates the film and television circuits throughout Latin America. The resulting transnational character of media technologies, techniques, and visual languages makes it increasingly difficult to demarcate the boundaries between "First World" and "Third World" media. As people from throughout Latin America and the Caribbean have immigrated to the U.S., often fleeing the repercussions of U.S. neocolonial involvement abroad, more established communities of Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans have been joined by growing numbers of Dominicans, Colombians, Chileans, Ecuadoreans, and Salvadorans. The traditional segregated model of U.S. Latino populations—Chicanos/Mexican-Americans in the Southwest, Puerto Ricans in the East, and a handful of Cubans in Florida—no longer accurately describes the diversity of Latin American cultures in this country and their encounters with white, African-American, and Asian North American cultures.[12]

These historical experiences of immigration, dislocation, and displacement have profound implications for discussing Latin American cinema. Situated on the border between two—or more—cultures, those who make documentaries like those discussed here are often forced to formulate film languages that can address not just different audiences but divergent modes of organizing and receiving information, and even different ideas about what constitutes information. And a video like *From Here, From This Side*, which entails a critical view of both U.S. and Mexican cultural clichés, will be received differently on each side of the border. Likewise, a film like *Las Madres*, made to inform an international and North American audience, will function differently when shown in Argentina. Work that is oppositional in a Latin American context may not be in the U.S. and vice versa.

Although relatively little has been written in English on Latino cinema in the United States,[13] recent critical work on Latina literature offers some useful parallels. An important contribution to criticism of writing by women from diverse traditions—Chicana, Puertorriquena, Cuban-American, and immigrant/exiled Latin American—*Breaking Boundaries: Latina Writings and Critical Readings*,[14] problematizes the bilingual or interlingual text and its exclusion from both English and Latin American literary canons. Another example can be found in contemporary Black British filmmaking and related projects—in sociology, music, and media studies—concerned with the processes of dislocation, adaptation, and hybridity developed in diaspora cultures.[15]

Just as one current in Black studies has adopted the model of "cultures of Africa and the African diaspora," the American migrations of the past decade propose parallel developments in Latin American diaspora cultures. Intersecting class, national, and ethnic identities, complicated by personal experiences, reflect a contemporary history of Latin America (and the United States) in which exile, rupture, transnational migration, and bicultural identity have become relatively common.[16] With this in mind, the range of recent documentary films and tapes by Latinas and Latin American women raises a series of questions: How does the diversity of Latina media "fit" into analyses of North American and Latin American cinemas? How do critics—both First and Third World—situate this work by film/videomakers who are themselves bicultural? And how do white North American critics, such as myself, write about these emerging immigrant cinemas without reduplicating problematic relationships between Third World cultures and First World critics? The traditional method of identifying and delineating "national cinemas" may no longer be adequate for understanding transnational networks of communications—not to mention a world where the category of "national culture" is itself hotly contested.

*Liz Kotz is a San Francisco-based writer, producer, and curator. She codirected Cine Acción's Women of the Americas film and video festival and teaches video aesthetics at New College of California.*

1989 Liz Kotz



**Mexican videomaker Gloria Ribe cuts together rephotographed film and television footage from the U.S. and Mexico in *From Here, From This Side* (1988) to create a powerful essay on North-South relations.**

Photo Kirk Schroeder

## NOTES

1. New Latin American Cinema refers to a movement of filmmaking that emerged in Latin America in the late 1950s. For an analysis of "the complex network of determinants that catalyzed the movement's emergence and later, its effort to achieve pan-Latin America unity," see Ana Lopez, "An 'Other' History: The New Latin American Cinema," *Radical History Review*, No. 41 (Fall 1988). For an examination of work by women within New Latin American Cinema, see B. Ruby Rich, "After the Revolution: The Second Coming of Latin American Cinema," *Village Voice*, February 10, 1987, pp. 23-27.

2. For more information on the Cocina, see Julianne Burton, "A Feast of Film-Video: Notes from the Cocina," *Cine Acción News*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Spring 1988), and Patricia Vega, "Video Work by Women," in the exhibition catalogue *Latin American Visions*, Pat Aufderheide, ed. (Philadelphia: Neighborhood Film and Video Project, 1989).

3. Available from Film Studies Department, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, K1S 5B6, Canada.

4. For a report on presentations at the 1986 Havana Festival, see *La Mujer en los medios audiovisuales: Memorias del VIII Festival Internacional del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano*, (Mexico City: Coordinacion de Difusion Cultural/UNAM, 1988).

5. For example, Tizuka Yamasaki's film *Patriamada* (Brazil, 1985), which incorporates extensive documentary footage into its dramatic narrative, or Solveig Hoogesteijn's *Macu: The Policeman's Wife* (Venezuela, 1987) and Susana Amaral's *The Hour of the Star* (Brazil, 1985), which use a documentary aesthetic in the context of feature films.

6. The Cine Mujer collective, founded in 1978, consists of Sara Bright, Eulalia Carrizosa, Dora Cecilia Rameriz, Particia Restrepo, Clara Riascos, and Luz Fanny Tobon.

7. "Entrevista con Cine Mujer," *Cinemateca: Cuadernos de Cine Colombiano*, No. 21 (March 1987), p.17.

8. See Liz Kotz, "An Interview with Lilith Video," *The Independent*, Vol. 11, No. 7 (August/September 1988).

9. See Paul Willemen, "An Avant Garde for the Eighties," *Framework* No. 24 (Spring 1984).

10. De Lara's comments were spoken at the panel discussion New Directions in Documentary Filmmaking at the Cine Acción Festival, San Francisco, October 22, 1988.

11. Ribe also participated in the New Directions panel discussion.

12. For an analysis of East Coast Latino communities, see Xavier F. Totti, "Latinos in New York," *The Portable Lower East Side*, Vol. 5, Nos. 1-2, (1988).

13. For an overview of contemporary Latino cinema, see Eduardo Diaz, *Latin American Visions*, *op. cit.*

14. Asuncion Horno-Delgado, Eliana Ortega, Nina M. Scott, and Nancy Saporta Sternbach., eds. *Breaking Boundaries* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1989). See also, Enrique Fernandez' article on a panel discussion at the Miami Film Festival, "El Norte: Tres Amigos," *Village Voice*, February 28, 1989, pp. 34.

15. For discussions of Black British cinema, see, for example, Kobena Mercer, "Recoding Narratives of Race and Nation," *The Independent*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (January/February 1989); Coco Fusco, *Young, British and Black* (Buffalo: Hallwalls, 1988); *Screen*, "The Last 'Special Issue' on Race?" Isaac Julien and Kobena Mercer, eds., Vol. 29, No. 4 (Autumn 1988); Reece Auguiste, Jim Pines, and Paul Gilroy, "Handsworth Songs: Interview with Black Audio Film Collective," *Framework* No. 34 (1988); Martina Attile and Jim Pines, "The Passion of Remembrance: Interview with Sankofa Film and Video," *Framework* No. 32/33 (1986); and Jim Pines, "Territories: An Interview with Isaac Julien," *Framework*, No. 26/27 (1985). For more general discussions of race, identity, and cultural information, see Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (London: Hutchinson/Birmingham Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies, 1987); Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question," *Screen*, Vol. 24, No. 5-6 (November/December 1983); and Paul Gilroy and Hazel Carby, eds., *The Empire Strikes Back* (London: Hutchinson/CCCS, 1982).

16. See, for example, Zuzana Pick, "Chilean Cinema in Exile," *Framework*, No. 34 (1987), and Coco Fusco, "Long Distance Fimmaking: An Interview with the Cine-Ojo Collective" in Coco Fusco, ed., *Reviewing Histories* (Buffalo: Hallwalls, 1987).

**Distribution Information**

*Ana Mendieta: Fuego de Tierra*: Video Data Bank, Art Institute of Chicago, 16 Colombus Drive at Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 443-3793

*An Island Surrounded by Water, Black Women, Carmen Carrascal, Diario Inconcluso, From Here, From This Side*: Women Make Movies, 225 Lafayette St., Ste. 212, New York, NY 10012; (212) 925-0606

*Batalla de Vieques, La Operación*: Cinema Guild, 1697 Broadway, New York, NY 10019; (212) 246-5522

*We're Not Asking for the Moon*: First Run/Icarus, 200 Park Ave. S., Ste. 1319, New York, NY 10003; (212) 674-3375

*Las Madres: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo*: Direct Cinema, Box 69799, Los Angeles, CA 90069; (213) 652-8000

*La Mirada de Myriam*: Cine Mujer, Apartado Aereo 2758, Bogotá, Colombia 283-6593 (Due to shared rights with FOCINE, the Colombian national film production agency, Cine Mujer has not been able to release distribution rights to the film in the United States.)

# FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE: THE INTERNATIONAL NON-FEATURE FILM FESTIVAL IN LENINGRAD



**U.S. delegates staying at the Leningrad Hotel had a first-class view of the battleship that fired the first shots of the 1917 Revolution, the Aurora. It is now a major tourist attraction, docked on the Neva River outside the Nakhimov Naval College.**

Photo: Kirk Simon

*Ed.'s note: A delegation of 14 U.S. filmmakers and media organization representatives attended the first documentary festival held in Leningrad from January 25-31, 1989. The following are reports by some of the U.S. participants on their experiences.*

## Lyn Goldfarb

Ever since the days of the Russian Revolution and Dziga Vèrtov, documentary film has held a prominent place in the Soviet Union. In recent years, the Soviets have become keenly interested in strengthening relations with U.S. documentary filmmakers. So it was only logical that after Soviet and U.S. filmmakers held their first Entertainment Summit in March 1987 on feature film production, a summit on documentary filmmaking would soon follow. Ten months later in Tbilisi, Soviet Georgia, a documentary film council was formally established as part of the Los Angeles-based American Soviet Film Initiative (ASFI) and its sister organization in the Soviet Union, the Americano-Sovietskaya Kino Initiativa (ASK) [see "Shoot Films, Not Rockets," April 1988]. When Leonid Gurevich, an award-winning Soviet documentary screenwriter and head of ASK's documentary committee, came to the States last summer to meet with his U.S. counterparts, we agreed that ASFI would help coordinate U.S. participation in the First International Non-Feature Film Festival in Leningrad. This was the first international festival in the USSR devoted to documentary film, which came about when the Moscow International Film Festival divided itself into three separate festivals: documentary, features, and children's films.

I was involved in several film projects which necessitated my being in Moscow for several months. So, while Anne Borin organized programming and arrangements on the U.S. side, I was working closely with the Soviets—Gurevich, ASK, and later representatives of Sovinterfest, the agency which sponsors all Soviet film festivals. Overall, we were able to work out the logistics fairly well, although the Soviets were not accustomed to dealing with our deadlines for purchasing discounted airline tickets. We had to exert considerable pressure to get them to make decisions three weeks in advance. However, the Soviets were quite generous in providing hotel accommodations and responding to the complicated local transportation needs of 14 Americans—the largest foreign delegation there.

Since this was a first-time festival, it is only natural that there would be some problems. One was that it was organized almost as if it were two different festivals: the competition held at the festival's headquarters in the Leningrad Hotel and the "informational" program spread over five or six theaters in town. Regrettably, there was no arrangement for audience discussion at the competition screenings. Equally unfortunate was that, after bringing together a remarkable group of delegates from around the world, the Soviets did not organize any get-togethers for the filmmakers to discuss the theoretical, artistic, or practical aspects of their craft. While discussions took place anyway, particularly on Soviet documentaries, they occurred in a different building—at Dom Kino, the Filmmakers Union Film Club—and were not always translated.

The in-town screenings for the information section and more popular films in competition were oriented toward Soviet residents. Scheduled day and night in theaters throughout the city, these events were poorly publicized to festival participants. There was no schedule in English for several days, and no one at the festival had all the

screening times in advance. But this did not present a problem to the Soviets, since the films were advertised on radio and schedules in Russian were posted at the individual theaters. (These listed the film times simply as being morning, afternoon, or evening.) These screenings, which regularly drew large, attentive crowds, did allow the filmmakers to introduce their work and talk to the audience afterwards.

Organizational and communication problems will always exist in the nascent stage of a film festival. Working on the International Non-Feature Film Festival in Leningrad was a valuable lesson in surmounting differences in culture and language, and helped further extend the network growing between Soviet and U.S. documentary filmmakers.

*Lyn Goldfarb is an Academy-Award nominated documentary filmmaker and organizer and co-chair of the Documentary Council of ASFI. She is currently producing a Soviet-American feature film,* Odyssey, *for* American Playhouse.

## Anne Borin

When Leonid Gurevich came to the United States last August, he and I spoke at length about the state of documentary production, distribution, and financing in the U.S. today. Before leaving, he asked if I would program and help coordinate the U.S. entries to the Leningrad documentary festival. He suggested that I work under the auspices of the American Soviet Film Initiative (ASFI) in California, along with their representative, Lyn Goldfarb.

The festival was to be dedicated solely to nonfiction film and reflected the Soviet film community's desire to see documentaries with a broad range of subject matter and political ideology. With the festival's theme of "peace, goodwill, and social justice" in mind, I set about my programming task.

The first challenge was to create the equivalent of a staff and organizational structure for a major festival in a matter of weeks. There were only two limitations: time and money. This would have to be a self-funding venture. We hoped the entry fee would cover all costs incurred. Althought this was a risk, I felt that at this particular time in history, we could not pass up the opportunity to make a coordinated programming effort on behalf of U.S. documentary filmmakers.

Because the entry deadline was little more than two months away, there wasn't time to advertise in national publications. However, I took advantage of several festivals and markets in New York City that brought in films from around the country. I also sought recommendations from numerous curators and programmers. I viewed over 80 films released since August 1987 and recruited 43. Then Marie Nesthus, principal librarian of the Donnell Media Center of the New York Public Library, and I chose 20 titles of great range and quality to send to the Soviets for their final selection. We were surprised and pleased when the Soviets wanted all 20 entries—*Girltalk* and *No Applause, Just Throw Money* for the main competition, and the other 18 for the informational screenings.*

Lyn and I next found ourselves in the roles of travel agent and shipping company. We helped secure visas and accommodations for the visiting filmmakers and even worked out a last-minute plan to take the 100 pounds of film as overweight luggage via Lyn's Aeroflot flight. (This helped get around shipping costs and the uncertainty of the films reaching the festival in time and in good condition.)

At the festival the flow of information from staff to festival guests was unpredictable, especially concerning screening arrangements. The administration was compartmentalized, and each department had an office on a different floor of the festival's headquarters in the Leningrad Hotel. The many people involved in settling a problem slowed matters down, but not unpleasantly, because any visit to an office could involve a glass of wine, a few presents, and lots of good cheer while waiting for the solution. With an added effort in the translation of materials, the process of communication finally became manageable and concise midway through the festival.

The little bit of free time we had to enjoy Leningrad was wonderful. The winter weather was unusually mild and the northern light extraordinary. We were free to travel throughout the city and get a taste of its glorious art and architecture. The festival generously provided daily tours to museums and film studios. One of the most exciting places was Dom Kino, a film club in the heart of Old Leningrad, which was alive with concerts, conversation, and film screenings far into the early morning hours.

As I look back at the frenzy of last minute telexes, hand-carried films, and initial uncertainties, I realize that the leap of faith to participate in this first-time festival, particularly with so many titles, was well worth taking. As I told many of the filmmakers in our delegation when problems arose, we were participating as pioneers. Any mistakes and problems would become valuable lessons in years to come. And as Gurevich wrote, quoting an old Russian proverb, "The first pancake was not a mess." Indeed, things did work out even better than expected.

*Anne Borin, former president of the New York Film and Video Council, was editor of* The Exiles, *an upcoming PBS documentary. She has been active in Soviet-U.S. cultural initiatives, including work on behalf of the Center for Soviet-American Dialogue.*

* Ultimately, 14 films went to the informational section: *Beirut: The Last Home Movie*, by Jennifer Fox; *Broken Noses*, by Bruce Weber; *Fake Fruit Factory*, by Chick Strand; *Family Gathering*, by Lise Yasui; *Gap-Toothed*


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## Alyson Denny

I landed in Moscow a couple of days before being sent by train to Leningrad and was immediately struck by the power of *glasnost*. Some official just handed me my room key and never called again. Not only did they not tell me what to do, they didn't even suggest anything. I wandered around the city for a couple of days until I thought I was beginning to understand something about how things work in the Soviet Union. But then I got to the festival.

At the introductory press conference, the festival director announced that a bottle of champagne would be awarded for the best question and the best answer at all subsequent press conferences. I thought this was some kind of obscure Russian joke. Two days later I was the proud owner of a bottle of Soviet champagne. In response to the question "Do you want to sell *Girltalk* in the Soviet Union?" I had asked, "I'd love to, but what would I do with the rubles?" Even then I wasn't sure if I'd received a best question or best answer bottle.

One of the relaxing things about the festival was that you couldn't get too wrapped up in marketing your film, since no one—neither filmmakers nor festival officials—seemed to know how to go about doing such a thing. I ended up just leaving a videotape of *Girltalk* with the festival officials so that anyone who wanted to see it or even put it on television could do so. Another relaxing aspect of festival life in Leningrad was the discovery that nowadays in the Soviet Union it is actually "in" to make documentaries. People would say, "Oh, you're a *documentary* filmmaker. How wonderful!"

*Girltalk* was one of the two U.S. films in the competition section. At first I thought the competition was the place to be—at least you knew where it was—until I began hearing about the incredible receptions films were getting in various theaters around town. Then I was pleasantly surprised to learn that *Girltalk* was also showing in town. So far as I can tell, I made it to most of my screenings, although I didn't hear about one 1 a.m. show until 3:30 that night. At these theaters I was greeted with great enthusiasm, gifts, and autograph requests.

*Girltalk* is a film about three runaway teenagers: Pinky, a truant; Mars, a stripper; and Martha, a teen mother and incest victim. One of the first questions at each screening was, "Are these stories typical of American girls?" My best attempt at an answer was that these stories are not by any means the norm in the United States, but they are much more common than many Americans know. I also got many of the same questions about the girls and the film that I get everywhere else.

**Members of the U.S. delegation gather for a luncheon hosted by the U.S. Consulate. Left to right, front row: Karen Goodman, Richard Leacock, Mark Lipson, Robert Stone, Lyn Goldfarb (holding folder), Sally Berger, Lawrence Sapadin, Les Blank, Anatoli Ilyashov; rear: Consulate staff and Bart Teush (third from left), Sue Marx, Robert Richter.**

Photo: Kirk Simon

At the end of the festival, *Girltalk* received a KIWI Award (Kino Women International is an organization of women professionals in film, television, and video which was founded in 1988 in Tblisi, Soviet Georgia.) Part of the award was five Russian folk dolls—one for each girl involved in the project: Kate Davis, myself, Pinky, Mars, and Martha—plus a squeaky toy for Martha's baby, Keith. This award was so in keeping with the collaborative nature of the film that I felt perhaps not much had been lost in the translation.

*Alyson Denny is the associate director, cinematographer, and coeditor of* Girltalk. *She is writer/director of the fiction film* Saturday Afternoon *and is about to begin production on* Ethan: Portrait of an Organ Salesman.

## Robert Stone

My memories of the Leningrad International Non-Feature Film Festival are like snapshots inside my head. I'm not quite sure what they add up to, but, for the experience alone, it was well worth the trip. I say this despite the organization of the festival and the selection of films, which were generally poor. It's Leningrad in the winter of 1989 that I remember. It's a guy who runs Leningrad's biggest jazz club telling me how he once, many years ago, wrote a letter to Louis Armstrong stating simply, "We dig you Satch"—and got a letter back from the man himself. It's flying across town in a taxi driven by a pretty young woman chain-smoking Marlboro cigarettes, blasting Depeche Mode on her cassette deck, and driving like the Keystone Cops. On her dashboard is a sign that displays the U.S. and Soviet flags with PEACE written across it. She doesn't speak English, but I like her. It's a currency that is officially overvalued by 2000 percent; these people laugh at their own money. It's drunkenly flagging down a huge passengerless bus at two in the morning and, for two packs of cigarettes, having the driver take us across town as if it were a taxi. While we're on the



subject of local transportation, going into the subway is like a journey to the center of the earth. We once went so far down I thought we had gone clear through and ended up on the Lexington Avenue subway line. But subways are subways and rush hour is the same the world over, even in the Soviet Union.

In the USSR these days left is right and right is left (politically that is)—i.e., Donald Trump is a leftist and Stalin is considered a right-winger. I remember intense discussions with Soviet documentary filmmakers about what is happening in their country. Numerous bottles of cognac have been consumed (vodka is in short supply), the sun is rising over the Neva River, and the conversation is only getting more interesting. They tell me about their plans to produce films with such titles as *Demon of the Revolution* about Trotsky, *Near the Tyrants* on Stalin and his pals, *Gulag Archipelago* based on the book by the exiled Solzhenitsyn, *Chernobyl Is Near* about that disaster and the global ecology, and a history of Russian monasteries.

In a large auditorium a punk band called Strange Games is belting out a steady rhythm (they're good!). Before the final number the crowd starts yelling, "Helter Skelter, Helter Skelter," to which the band obliges with a terrific rendition. The crowd goes nuts. Another night there's a jazz ensemble of the quality you might expect to see at Carnegie Hall.

I remember a guy from Azerbaidzhan coming up to me in a bar. He humbly explains that he'd like me to come home with him to take a Polaroid of him, his wife, and their newborn daughter to send to his parents back home. "Sure, why not." Then there is the anarchist bass player, recently released from what he called a "Bolshevik prison camp" for black marketeering. He sports a t-shirt with a picture of a crazed Mickey Mouse holding a hammer and sickle. He likes Frank Zappa. This is a country on the verge of a nervous breakdown. I want to go back.

*Robert Stone is producer/director of* Radio Bikini.

## Sue Marx

Showing *Young at Heart* at the Leningrad film festival was a deeply moving experience. The film, which I coproduced and codirected with Pamela Conn, is about my 87-year-old Soviet-born father, Louis Gothelf, and his new 86-year-old American-born wife, Reva—two widowed artists who met and married late in life.

Initially I was somewhat concerned about the reaction the Soviets might have to the film's subject matter, this being a love story about two obviously well-to-do older Americans. But the positive, enthusiastic response at each of the three screenings confirmed my belief that there is really little difference in people's basic feelings. The Soviet audiences' questions and comments following the screenings were almost exactly the same as those I get in the U.S. But there was something special here, due to my father's connection with their country. They could still hear something of his Russian accent, although he left the Soviet Union when he was 13 years old. They wanted to know all about him: Where he was born? Was he healthy and happy? and so on.

The Soviets also enjoyed telling me their personal stories and communicating in other ways. A translator said that she went home to her widowed mother after a screening and encouraged her to come see the film the next day, "so she could get inspired to change her life." After another screening, a man walked up and handed me a drawing he had done, asking that I give it to my father. Another Soviet artist brought to my hotel room


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A Dixieland band gets down at the Dom Kino, a cine club in the old section of Leningrad where Soviet and visiting filmmakers could watch screenings, listen to music, and talk far into the night.

several books she had illustrated. Written inside one was a long message for Reva, which I assume my father has translated by now. Leningrad filmmaker Ludmila Stanukinas presented me with a hand-made paint brush which an elderly man wanted my father to have. And sitting on a shelf in my office are two ceramic apples, a special award from KIWI.

*Young at Heart* was screened over three days in three different theaters: twice in small theaters in town before completely Soviet audiences and once before the festival audience in the hotel's concert hall. Translation sometimes presented a problem. I had no trouble with the booming voice of the Russian translator which came over the loudspeakers in the theaters, although this gave audiences only one option—listening to the Russian translation. At the hotel, one was supplied with headsets which relayed translations in several languages. But, because of the volumn of the Russian translation, it was impossible to concentrate on your chosen language, much less hear the original soundtrack, which was turned down.

Overall I'd say the festival was a success, but there were times when confusion reigned. Given the festival's handicaps—a first-time effort, a diversity of languages to cope with, no computers or copying machines to help—it's remarkable that it went as well as it did. Anne Borin did a great job organizing the U.S. contingent and Lyn Goldfarb provided the necessary glue and clout to keep it together. Once everyone got into the swing of things, we all had a great time. Best of all, I got to take my father back to the Soviet Union—on film.

*Sue Marx is a Detroit-based writer, producer, and director. She has won numerous international awards, including seven Emmys and an Academy Award for* Young at Heart, *voted Best Documentary Short Subject last year.*

## Robert Richter

When I visited Moscow about 10 years ago, nearly everyone I spoke to was frowning as they described how wonderful things were. In my recent journey to Leningrad, nearly everyone was smiling as they described how bad things were. I had come face to face with the refreshing experience of *glasnost* and *perestroika*.

If my festival experience reflects changes since Mikhail Gorbachev became leader of the USSR, then it seems Soviet artists are now making a special point of candidly speaking out to Americans. Open criticism and frank recognition of their country's problems were the rule rather than the exception, whether I was speaking with festival officials, filmmakers, or Intourist guides. Also, in informal conversations many Soviet festival and film officials expressed a strong interest in U.S./USSR coproductions and in the distribution of U.S. documentaries in the Soviet Union. A major obstacle, however, which they recognize, is the fact that rubles are not convertible into U.S. dollars. Any money made from Soviet distribution has to be spent there.

There were a number of special events scheduled throughout the week. One that placed the festival on the front pages of the newspapers was the return visit of Natalia Makarova, a prima ballerina in Leningrad's Kirov Ballet who had defected to the West in 1971. Since a BBC film by and about Makarova had been selected for the festival, she had been granted permission by the Soviet government to appear with the film and also perform with the Kirov Ballet. I was among the crowd of 2,000 eager and expectant people who overflowed a cultural center to welcome Natalia and her film. An incredibly emotional event, it was her first public appearance in the city in 18 years. The man sitting in front of me rushed to the stage the moment she walked on. He knelt next to her, kissed her foot, the hem of her skirt, her hand, and presented her with a bouquet of roses. Her tearful and joyful response to her adoring audience was a front-page story and photograph in the next day's *Pravda*—an indication of the new Soviet mood.

"If Hitler was a criminal, then Stalin was a criminal"—that is how the master of ceremonies introduced another festival event, one held "in memory of the Stalinist repression's victims." Ten years ago Stalin was still considered a god to the Soviets. Now, there is standing room only at a large theater showing a Soviet film about his reign of injustice, torture, violence, and death. Relatives of the victims were on stage to amplify the film's reports and answer audience questions. The general sentiment was, "We can no longer remain silent" about the terrible things that happened during Stalin's rule. The new political climate was also reflected in Soviet films that dealt candidly and graphically with such problems as drug addiction (*Needles*), self-immolation by hundreds of women in Uzbekistan (*Flame*), and false criminal charges against a prominent Soviet writer (*Counter-Claim*).

These heavy messages were in contrast to the mood at the Dom Kino, the cinema club which combined a restaurant, bar, screening rooms, and jam sessions of American jazz and Dixieland under one roof. It was here where the foreign festival participants freely mixed with Soviet filmmakers. Despite the problems of screening arrangements, schedules, and communications, when Leningrad again undertakes such an ambitious event, it will be a wonderful opportunity for independent producers everywhere.

*Robert Richter is an independent producer and has been president of AIVF since 1982.*

## Kirk Simon and Karen Goodman

*No Applause, Just Throw Money*, one of two U.S. films selected for the official competition, is about New York City's street performers—101 of them.

Karen Goodman accepts the Silver Prize for *No Applause, Just Throw Money* at the closing ceremony. Jury head Irwin Leiser is at far right.

Photo: Kirk Simon

The Soviets have an intense hunger for information about New York; they're fascinated by the Great City of Capitalism. So the theaters were packed and the audiences eager and receptive when we showed our film. Soviet paparazzi were out in full regalia and television crews covered the first screening. Interviews brought hard questions of substance. The usual "how many rolls? how long? how much?" were absent. Instead, there were questions about theme, symbolism, intent, as well as questions like, "What's the relationship between your film, Toulouse-Lautrec, and Picasso?" In an interview with Moscow Central TV, the producer/interviewer popped a surprise question: Would we be interested in documenting our impressions of Leningrad—*No Applause* à la Russe? We couldn't quite believe they were serious, but they assured us their offer was very real. It included no rubles, but a complete crew: cameraman, engineer, gaffer, grip, driver, translator, and van. They said we could photograph anywhere we wanted. As we understood it, the idea was to have a look at the Soviet cityscape through American eyes. We had only to agree to allow the results to be broadcast on *Vzljad* (*View*), a top-rated show reputed to be something of an avant-garde *60 Minutes*. Who could refuse? But we had less than a day to prepare.

The next morning, we were greeted by our crew, who carried the latest in Soviet video equipment: location 1" deck complete with an outdated, tired Ikegami 75. Initially we underestimated our cameraman, assuming he'd be a jaded news hack, like his U.S. counterpart. We couldn't have been more wrong. To earn the right to be a Soviet news camera operator, you need six years of technical training and an apprenticeship in a film studio. Our cameraman was accomplished, intuitive, and versed in Eisenstein.

We roamed the streets quite freely, searching for those documentary "decisive moments." For the first shot of the day, we chose familiar ground: some Soviet street performers whom we'd met at a party the night before. We set up near the Aurora, the famous battleship that fired the first shots of the Revolution and is now a Soviet tourist attraction—their equivalent of the Liberty Bell. The performers were a wacky, irreverent mime troup, their impromptu performance rich with political satire. This included a Chaplinesque impersonation of the guards protecting the battleship. Suddenly, the Aurora's captain stormed down the gangplank followed by a machine gun-toting entourage. He accused our Soviet producer of committing "sacrilege" by desecrating a "sacred Soviet War Museum." We were convinced we were going to be arrested. But somehow in the heated discussion our producer managed to talk his way out of the jam. Score one for *glasnost*.

We continued on our way, stopping to photograph street scenes and icy cityscapes of the town modeled on Venice. Our final stop was the subway. The stations are majestic and ornate and the escalators, dramatically lit by deco fixtures, dive perhaps six stories down. It was the perfect location for shooting a parade of Russian faces (and hats). Our producer explained that the subway is considered a military installation and is illegal to photograph. Its depth is a secret apparently dating back to World War II, when Leningrad was heavily bombed by the Nazis. Still, he offered to get the shots, and asked that we wait outside. Just when we were convinced they would never return, the cameraman reappeared, but our fearless producer had been escorted into the subway commander's office. What seemed like hours later, he too emerged, having smooth-talked his way out of another sticky situation. Since we had to decline our producer's request to edit the piece with him in Moscow, we ended with a long discussion—about structure and music, and about themes, symbols, and intentions.

Our final surprise was the jury's award of a Silver Prize to *No Applause*. It came with a marble and silver statue of a centaur and 1000 nonconvertible rubles. Since we were departing at 8 a.m. the next morning, we couldn't spend a single ruble—and weren't permitted to exchange them for dollars. So we left and the rubles stayed. Still, it was a fair exchange.




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The Barricade Theater, where *The Thin Blue Line* appeared, was one of the five theaters in town that presented films in the festival's "informational" section.

Photo: Mark Jason

*Karen Goodman and Kirk Simon are working on a biography of Buckminster Fuller for PBS and a film on animal rights for HBO. Both were Academy Award nominees. Goodman for* Children's Storefront *and Simon for* Isaac in America: A Journey with Isaac Bashevis Singer.

## Lawrence Sapadin

AIVF president Robert Richter and I were invited to the new Leningrad festival by Sovinterfest, the national film festival agency. The Soviets wanted to know more about U.S. independent film production. We wanted to find out whether there were opportunities for U.S./Soviet coproduction and whether AIVF's Festival Bureau could promote the entry of independent work in Soviet film festivals. I had a third interest: to try to make sense of *perestroika*.

Under *perestroika*, the Soviet film industry has been decentralized. Now semi-autonomous production groups must raise their own funds and show a surplus at the end of the year. As a result of these new economic demands and the liberalization of subject matter that can be filmed, Soviet production groups are eager to do business with foreign filmmakers and distributors. Only they are not sure how. They speak enviously of American business "know-how."

One of the chief obstacles to doing business with the Soviet Union is the nonconvertibility of the currency. The ruble is "soft" currency: it cannot be exported and is worthless outside the Soviet Union. Consequently, business often has to be done by barter. Pepsi-Cola, for example, swaps its cola syrup for Stolichnaya vodka, which it distributes in the United States. Likewise for filmmakers interested in coproduction, no money, or at least no rubles, would cross borders. Rather, each partner would provide the resources for its part in production. They might each then receive the earnings from their respective markets. A film could be a thoroughly cooperative creative effort, but the production would remain rooted in two separate and distinct economies.

Richter and I met with the director of the Leningrad festival, Michail Litviakov, to describe how AIVF (and its foundation affiliate, FIVF) gathers U.S. independent work for screening and selection by foreign festival representatives. This, we explained, is a very efficient way to help filmmakers and festival representatives overcome the linguistic and cultural barriers to festival entry. Our conversation was interrupted throughout by vodka toasts to greater U.S./USSR cooperation and by the exchange of small gifts.

This paved the way for a meeting the following day with Yuri Khodjaev, director of Sovinterfest. Khodjaev was eager to begin working with AIVF to gather U.S. independent films for the Moscow Festival this summer. Again the problem was currency and covering the cost of shipments to the USSR. However, in the spirit of *glasnost*, we agreed in principle to go forward, but are still working out the details by telex.

Under *perestroika* the Soviet Union is contradictory and surprising.

- The festival director's interpreter was a young man named Nicholas who spoke almost perfect "American" English, right down to the slang. He told us his goal in life is to become a Top 40 deejay in the U.S.
- One of our interpreters, Irena, turned down an opportunity to read some "alternative" U.S. journals. She said that she would rather read *Vogue*, *Cosmopolitan*, or *Mademoiselle*.
- I asked a festival staff person what *perestroika*

meant. He said it meant turning the ruble into hard currency on the world market.

• *Variety* reports that the Soviet national TV network, Gosteleradio, has hired the British-based ad agency Saatchi and Saatchi to consult on selling advertising time on TV to international companies. 30-second spots would go for $18,000 to $36,000.

My effort to understand *perestroika* was a failure. I was more confused than before. But I was not alone. On the return flight to New York, I read that a chief economic advisor to the Kremlin leadership had been assigned the task of analyzing the central issue for the 1990s in the Soviet Union: "What is socialism and what is property under socialism?" For filmmakers, the question will be: what is *filmmaking* under socialism, without the constraints of censorship or the dead hand of bureaucracy? Judging from the Leningrad festival, the answer will be worth waiting for.

*Lawrence Sapadin is the executive director of AIVF.*


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# IN BRIEF

This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the **FIVF Festival Bureau.** Listings do not constitute an endorsement & since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. If your experience differs from our account, please let us know so we can improve our reliability.

## Domestic

ASPEN FILMFEST, Sept. 20-24, CO. Last yr was 10th anniv. for celebration of US feature & short independent films, held in Rocky Mountain locale. Short subject competition awards $2300 in cash prizes based on "concept, execution, originality, creativity, style & technical excellence." Awards incl. Grand Prize, Colorado Award, 1st prize, Judges Award, Filmfest Award & special recognition awards. All genres accepted. Purely instructional & promo films not accepted. Entries must be completed after Jan. 1, 1988 & under 30 min. Entry fee: $15. Format: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: June 20 for short film competition, Aug. 15 for other entries. Contact: Jodi Ensign, Aspen Filmfest, Box 8910, Aspen, CO 81612; (303) 925-6882.

HAWAII INTERNATIONAL FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL. December, HI. 9th edition of fest that programs work promoting crosscultural understanding btwn people of Asia, Pacific & US. Over 70,000 people attend free screenings. Last yr 85 films selected from 1,000 entries.


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features, docs & shorts accepted. Selections also travel to neighbor islands Maui, Kauai, Hawaii. Last yr "Best of the HIFF" also toured college campuses & community theaters in CA, Seattle & NM. Noncompetitive, but offers East-West Center Award for feature best promoting annual fest theme of "When Strangers Meet" & HIFF Documentary Award, instituted last yr. HI is celebrating 200th anniv. of arrival of Chinese on island & programming committee especially interested in films related to Chinese experience. Academic film symposium also held; this yr topic is "Melodrama & Film — East & West." Programmers from several major fests attend to preview films. Format: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Deadline: July 1. Contact: Jeannette Paulson, coordinator, Hawaii International Film Festival, East-West Center, Institute of Culture & Communication, 1777 East-West Rd., Honolulu, HI 96848; (808) 944-7666, telex: EWCAD 7430149.

Margaret Mead Film Festival. November, NY. Sociological, anthropological & cultural topics are backbone of major ethno-doc fest, founded by & named in honor of anthropologist/filmmaker Mead. Now in 13th yr, fest annually programs over 50 films, w/ majority premieres from several continents. Last yr groupings of films incl. cultural encounters, women's voices, man & nature, parent & child, ritual & celebration, portraits of passion, cultural continuity, coming of age, pride & prejudice. Most directors attend & introduce films. Format: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Deadline: June 30. Contact: Malcolm Arth, Margaret Mead Film Festival, American Museum of Natural History, 79th St. & Central Park W, New York, NY 10024; (212) 873-1070.

Mill Valley Film & Video Festival. Oct. 5-12, CA. "Small-town intimacy" describes atmosphere at 8-day noncompetitive fest specializing in independent films, now beginning 12th season. Last yr 44 films, nat'l & int'l (several premieres), shown to audiences of over 17,000 in several sold-out screenings. Several programs introduced by director, producer, or cast members. Reps from many major & specialty distributors attended. Program features seminars, tributes & music events, as well as 3-day videofest. Accepts features, short (up to 60 min.), docs & narrative/experimental/animated shorts (up to 15 min.) to play w/ features. Format: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: June 30. Contact: Mary Pottier, assoc. director of programming, Mill Valley Film & Video Festival, 80 Lomita Dr., Ste 20, Mill Valley, CA 94941; (415) 383-5256.

New York Film Festival. Sept. 22-Oct. 9, NY. Now in 27th yr presenting eclectic program of int'l trends to NY audiences, well-respected noncompetitive NYFF has traditionally served as premiere venue for participating filmmakers. Program constructed from approx. 25 films selected from dramatic, doc, animated short & experimental entries shown at other int'l fests during previous yr or superlative new productions. Last yr program dominated by films from 3d World & Eastern Europe & also featured combination of 4 avant-garde films in 1 program. Nearly all tickets for fest sold out in advance. Program committee chair is Richard Peña, program director of Lincoln Center Film Society now in 2nd yr at the post, w/ members Wendy Keys of the Film Society & film critics Carrie Rickey, David Sterritt & Philip Lopate. Fest also has a consultant for US ind. films. Selections must be US premieres w/ no prior public, theatrical or commercial exhibition or distribution. Deadlines: feature-length films (20 min. & over), July 3; shorts (under 20 min.), July 14. Format: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4" & 1/2". Contact: Marian Masone, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 140 W. 65th St., New York, NY 10023; (212) 877-1800.

Robert Flaherty Film Seminar. Aug. 12-19, NY. Over the yrs, Flaherty alumni have described the intensity of this seminar as "unparalleled experience," "exhilarating," "exhausting." Now in 35th yr, week-long seminar, held on Wells College campus in central NYS, promises to probe and analyze content of film/videomaking, to "bring participants into close contact w/ specific films & tapes that have reached out to touch human spirit & then to put them into down-to-earth communication w/ the people who made these films, to illuminate how the films came into being." Filmmakers from around the world engage in round-the-clock critique of works chosen by a different programmer each yr. Selections not announced until screening time. Deadline: June 1. Contact: Esme Dick, administrative director, International Film Seminars, 44 W. 56th St., 3rd fl., New York, NY 10019; (212) 582-0273.

## Foreign

Canadian International Amateur Film Festival, November, Canada. Open to nonprofessional prods in 3 cats: amateur (no prof. assistance or financial object), independent (some professional help), preprofessional film students (enrolled in film school, usually at college level). Awards: best Canadian entry, best scenario, best doc, best natural sciences, best animation, best experimental, best edited, most humorous, best film by age 16-19, best film by teen under 16. Max. running time: 30 min. Entry fee: $15 Canadian. Format: 16mm, super 8, 8mm, 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Deadline: June 1. Contact: B.V.W. Andrews, Festival Canadien International du Film d'Art, 25 Eugenia St., Barrie, Ontario, Canada L4M 1P6; (705) 737-2729.

Cork International Film Festival, September, Ireland. One of 2 major fests in Ireland, Cork programs wide int'l panorama of dramatic, doc, experimental, animated & shorts & presents significant opportunity for screening ind. work in Ireland. Fest now in 34th yr. Competition section for shorts only. Work must be produced in 12 months prior to fest. Format: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: June 30. Contact: Michael Hannigan/Theo Dorgan, directors, Cork International Film Festival, Triskel Arts Center Tobin St., Cork, Ireland; tel: (021) 271711/275944; telex: 75390.

Moscow International Film Festival, July 8-17, USSR. Major biennial competition (alternating w/ Karlovy Vary in Czechoslovakia) for feature fiction films, now in 16th yr. Last edition presented in spirit of *glasnost/perestroika* & in midst of extensive Soviet film industry reforms. 35mm & 70mm films eligible for feature competition if not yet presented in another int'l fest competition, under 120 min. & completed after July 1987. One film per country selected; last time 27 films competed. Short film competition: each country presents program of 35mm & 16mm shorts (short features, docs, popular science & animation) w/ running time under 45 min. & completed after July 1987. Shorts awarded at other fests not eligible. Int'l jury awards: Grand Prix, Special Prize, Best Actor/Actress (feature); 2 Gold Awards, 3 Silver Awards (shorts). Fest also has panorama (information) section, retros & market. Over 1600 guests & 110 countries participated last time. Deadline: June 1. Contact: Yuri Khodjaev, director, USSR State Committee for Cinematography/Directorate of International Film Festivals & Exhibitions (SOVINTERFEST), 10, Khokhlovsky Per., Moscow 109028, USSR; tel: 227-89-24; telex: 411263 FEST SU.

FIVF's Festival Bureau may cooperate w/ Moscow fest in selection of U.S. entries, collecting preview cassettes & handling shipping arrangements. For further info, contact: Kathryn Bowser, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th Fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400, as soon as possible.

Parma International Medical & Scientific Film Festival, Nov. 21-26, Italy. 4th edition of competitive fest that "aims to present the best worldwide scientific film works...in the field of scientific didactics, health & ecologic education." Sections: medical & scientific research & updating (biomedical sciences, medicine & medical specialties, surgery & surgical specialties), health ed (safety in home & workplace, prevention of infectious & degenerative diseases, mental health, drug dependencies, handicaps, organization of health services), ecology & health (environmental impact, industrial & environmental risks, controls & technical solutions). 1989 special cats: nutrition (food production, pesticides, bioengineering, etc.) & cancer (information & prevention). Grand Prix awarded in each section & special cat. Other awards: WHO Golden Award to best health ed film; special awards to best films on biomedical sciences, specialistic medicine, general medicine, specialistic surgery, surgery, safety in home & workplaces, infectious & degenerative diseases, mental health, drug problems, handicaps, organization of health services, environmental impact, industrial/environmental risk, controls & technical solutions. Certificates of merit for script, direction, photography, editing, animation, special effects, sound.

FIVF will coordinate screening & shipment of entries to Italy. AIVF president Robert Richter will screen & make recommendations for fest. Entries must be completed in previous 3 yrs. Format: 3/4", 35mm, 16mm; preselection on 1/2". For further info & applications, contact Robert Richter or Kathryn Bowser, FIVF Festival Bureau/Parma Festival, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400. Deadline: July 1. Address in Italy (for reference, fest has requested that US entries be coordinated by Richter): Medikinale International Parma, via Garibaldi n. 1, 43100 Parma, Italy; tel: (0521) 37792-285554-36865; telex: 531518 sprint I for MIP; fax: (0521) 285858.

## FIVF TAPE LIBRARY

The FIVF Festival Bureau has established a tape library of members' current works to expedite screenings for upcoming film and video festivals. 1/2" and 3/4" tapes will be accepted. Members interested in depositing their work in the library should contact: Kathryn Bowser, Festival Bureau director, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012, (212) 473-3400.

# IN AND OUT OF PRODUCTION



In *Vienna Is Different: 50 Years after the Anschluss* Susan Korda and David Leitner examine Vienna's period of soul-searching against the backdrop of the Waldheim controversy on the fiftieth anniversary of Hitler's annexation of Austria.

Courtesy filmmakers

## Renee Tajima

The versatile dancer-musician-poet-videomaker Mary Easter has completed a 19-minute tape entitled **Some People**, which is now available for distribution through Intermedia Arts Minnesota. The work interweaves dancing and storytelling vignettes as a means of exploring the private stories of several seemingly commonplace people. Easter describes the tape this way: "In nonlinear fashion, the video looks at moments in the lives of seven Black characters, ordinary people calling on their considerable resources of imagination and perseverance to enrich their lives. Through movement, monologues, and song, their stories are revealed as realities overlap and memories intertwine." *Some People* is available on 3/4" video and VHS. *Some People*: Intermedia Arts, 425 Ontario St., S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 627-4444.

Dance is also the focus of **Grand Central Dances**, a television special featuring performances in New York's Grand Central Terminal by The Merce Cunningham Dance Company, Lucinda Childs Company, juggler Michael Moschen, highwire artist Philip Petit, and others. The program, produced and directed by Norris J. Chumley, is a visual narrative and performance piece, as seen and heard through the words, images, choreography, and rhythms of the participants. The tape is based on the event of the same name, originally produced by Dancing in the Streets. Chumley and coproducer Donna Drewes received a postproduction grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to complete the piece, which is made possible with additional assistance from WNET/Thirteen and the Downtown Community TV Center. *Grand Central Dances*: Magnetic Arts, 20 Desbrosses St., New York, NY 10013; tel: (212) 941-7720; fax: (212) 226-8096.

In his lonely apartment, a young filmmaker works feverishly to complete what he hopes will be his masterpiece—a "psychedelic western" in which the Evil Gunfighter kills the Good Gunfighter as the beautiful Damsel looks on in distress. But every edit of the film seems a failure, the Filmmaker drinks heavily in anticipation of his own fall, and to top it off, he has a fight with his girlfriend. In John Perez' new 18-minute narrative, **The Existential Gunfighter**, art, reality, and dreams merge in the life of the young Filmmaker, played by a real young filmmaker, E. Francis Donnelly. In Perez' script, the Filmmaker pursues his angry Girlfriend (Jamie Kinser), but in a nightmarish slumber she is transformed into the Evil Gunfighter, stalking him in bed. Perez shot *The Existential Gunfighter* around New York City and completed it over a period of two years. *The Existential Gunfighter*: Pug Pictures; (212) 927-9062.

Milwaukee-based media artist Rob Danielson and sculptor Terese Agnew have mounted **Salvage Lounge: Of Product by Public**, a multimedia installation work-in-progress, at the Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center in Buffalo, New York. The result of a five-week residency at the center, *Salvage Lounge* includes 11 channels of video, ranging from interviews to eavesdropping and material taped in various work environments. The artists enlisted the participation of local people involved in salvage—haulers, "scrappers," salvage and tire companies, junkyards, volunteers, and Buffalo's Department of Streets and Sanitation—to collect the material for the piece. The installation itself consisted of a structure of found objects and video. *Salvage Lounge*: Rob Danielson, 2075 S. 13th St., Milwaukee, WI 53204; (414) 384-7083.

The Boston Film Collective has just completed **Finding Our Way—Men Talk about Their Sexuality**, a videotape that asks the questions: What do men like about their sexuality? How did they learn about sex? What do men really want sexually? How does sexual expression change with age? In order to examine these questions, the producers gathered 12 men at a weekend retreat to talk about their sexual selves. They ranged in age from 27 to 71 and came from different walks of life—a writer, an insurance agent, a clergyman, the owner of a dry cleaning store—and were heterosexual, gay, and bisexual. This diversity provided a dialogue, culminating in a discussion of the effects of age on sexuality. In it, one older man discusses the pain surrounding his sexual decline, while another describes precisely the opposite—how his sexuality became richer and all-encompassing after the age of 65. The producers of *Finding Our Way* view the tape as a step toward creating new role models and moving beyond one-dimensional stereotypes of men. It was produced over a four-year period by the Cooperative, a group of seven men that includes filmmakers Nicolas Kaufman, Mark Lipman, and Bestor Cram. *Finding Our Way*: Kaufman Productions, 40 Clyde St., Newtonville, MA 02160.

**Into the Great Solitude**, a new film by Christopher Knight, will air on public television stations this May on the *Adventure* series. The 57-minute work is a film journal of naturalist-author Rob Perkin's 700-mile solo canoe voyage down the remote Back River in the Northwest Territories of Canada. Alone for 72 days in the tundra, Perkins recorded his own journey using techniques and cameras especially adapted by Knight for the project. With this approach, the film attempts to achieve an intimacy with the viewer, who shares Perkins' physical journey through the unusual Arctic landscape and follows his innermost thoughts and feelings about the land, the wild animals he encounters, and his relationship with his father who was gravely ill as he embarked on the voyage. *Into the Great Solitude* is Knight's third film featuring solo adventurers, including *American Challenge* and *Around Alone: Into the Great Solitude*: The New Film Company, 7 Mystic St., Arlington, MA 02174; (617) 641-2580.

New York-based filmmakers Susan Korda and David Leitner premiered **Vienna Is Different: 50 Years After the Anschluss** at the International

AIVF members are invited to submit detailed information about film/video work that is in production or has recently been completed for inclusion in **In and Out of Production**. Send descriptions and black and white photographs to: *The Independent*, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012, Attn: In and Out of Production.

Forum of Young Cinema of the 1989 Berlin International Film Festival in February. Filmed in Vienna during March of last year, against the backdrop of both the Waldheim controversy and the fiftieth anniversary of the Anschluss—Hitler's annexation of Austria—*Vienna Is Different* depicts Austrians addressing a past that has been suppressed and denied. Declared by the Allies to be a victim of Nazi aggression, Austria evaded postwar scrutiny of its role in Hitler's war. But Kurt Waldheim's election as Austrian president brought this "honeymoon" to an end. Shot in cafés, on the street, at public demonstrations, official receptions, cabarets, and theater performances, the 75-minute film also uses clips from television and radio to explore the country's month of soul-searching. *Vienna Is Different*: Leitmotif Filmproduction, 280 Mulberry St., New York, NY 10012; (212) 966-4348.

Former stand-up comic meets social issue documentarian in **Guerilla Art**, a half-hour film featuring New York's self-proclaimed "conscience of the art world," the Guerilla Girls. As the prices of artwork soar to an all-time high, so, it seems, do incidences of discrimination against women and artists of color within the art industry. The Guerilla Girls engage in the controversial tactic of postering neighborhoods with incriminating statistics—for example, only four New York galleries showed the work of Black women artists during the 1986-87 season, and women artists earn one-third the revenue of their male counterparts. The group is currently entering production of a five-minute trailer for the film, featuring artist Mark Kostabi, who views the art industry as a strictly merit-based one and provides the focus for interviews with curators, gallery owners, and "successful" artists. Seed money for the project was provided by Art Matters and the fiscal sponsor is Women Make Movies. *Guerilla Art* is produced and directed by Amy Harrison and written by Margaret A. Herbig. *Guerilla Art*: Amy Harrison, Guerilla Art Productions, c/o Store East, 304 E. 5th St., New York, NY 10003; (212) 254-8890; 598-9190.



**Southern California is one of the spots from around that world where Jayce Salloum shot on location for his video *Once You've Shot the Gun You Can't Stop the Bullet*.**

Courtesy videomaker

Baltimore-based filmaker Peter Walsh has just completed **Picture of Me,** a 3-minute 16mm short. Using home movies, altered frame animation, a non-narrative structure and soundtrack, and found media images, Walsh discusses the relationships between sexuality, sensuality, gender, and mass media. *Picture of Me* premiered in February at the Art Artic in Baltimore. *Picture of Me*: Khameleon Film and Video, 1536 William St., Baltimore, MD 21230; (301) 539-0867.

Using live footage filmed around the world over a period of three years, independent producer Jayce Salloum has produced **Once You've Shot the Gun You Can't Stop the Bullet**, a seven-minute videotape edited from super 8 film and 8mm videotape original material. The piece is described by Salloum as one that "weaves itself in and out of experiences of differentiation and distance, closeness and otherness, and questions of discourse and construction in the viewing and constitution of the subject." He shot it on location in as far-flung places as Beirut, Bikfaya, Byblos, Jerusalem, Jouni, Kelowna, La Jolla, Las Vegas, Limosol, Los Angeles, Mesa, New York, Portland, and Tijuana. *Once You've Shot the Gun* was commissioned by the Long Beach Museum of Art as part of its 1988 Open Channels program. *Once You've Shot the Gun*: Jayce Salloum, 384 Broadway, New York, NY 10013; (212) 260-7802; 226-9582.


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# CLASSIFIEDS

The Independent's **Classifieds** column includes all listings for "Buy • Rent • Sell," "Freelancers" & "Postproduction" categories. It is restricted to members only. Each entry has a **250 character limit** & costs **$20 per issue.** Ads exceeding this length will be edited. Payment must be made at the time of submission. Anyone wishing to run a classified ad more than once must pay for each insertion & indicate the number of insertions on the submitted copy. Each classified ad must be typed, double-spaced & worded exactly as it should appear.

Deadlines for **Classifieds** will be respected. These are the 8th of each month, **two months** prior to the cover date, e.g., May 8 for the July issue. Make check or money order—no cash, please—payable to FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.

## Buy • Rent • Sell

FOR SALE: Arriflex S/B w/ APEC, con. & var. spd. motors, Cine 60 batt., Ang. 12-120, Ang. 5.9, Schn. 10, 25, 50, Tiffen, case. Zeiss Moviscope, Ediquip amp, Moviola, sync block & rewinds, Bolex splcr, Eiki proj. w/ rec. $4,100, pkg or sep. Jerry (203) 359-8992.

FOR RENT in your space: Complete Sony 5850, 5800, RM440 off-line. Anvil cases fold out to form convenient table, cutting space. Reasonable rate. For Sale: 8-plate Steenbeck. 1000' rewind, reinforced handles. VG cond. Must sell. $10,500/b.o. (914) 478-0518.

PAINT & ANIMATION PACKAGE: Lumena 16 paint box, titler, animator, video tools, tips, artwork, etc. (worth over $50,000) will let go for $15,000 or best offer. Can divide. Also BCD, Targa, VVP. Call Ed (212) 228-4024.

BOLEX ANIMATION JK motor, 16mm rflx, JK controller, frxbr, frwd, rev, cont, programmer, all $1500. (212) 228-4024.

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FOR SALE: Tamron Fotovix. Japanese model, converts slides & negs to video (b&w or color). Zoom, pan, color correct, auto fade. 20 hrs. use, $2,300 new. Asking $1,100 or b.o. Miss Doria, (718) 383-6176.

BUY CHEAPER THAN RENTAL: Cinema Products CP-16 camera w/ Angenieux 12-120 zoom, 2 mags, on-board battery, filters, case $1500 firm. Tripod, accessories also available. Reid (804) 979-4724.

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## Freelancers

EXPERIENCED ATTORNEY to care for your personal and business related legal matters. General practice includes negotiation and review of contracts, litigation, real estate, negligence and medical malpractice. Free consultation. Peter Foster (212) 254-9368.

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PROD. CONTACTS: monthly newsletter listing SAG & nonunion films in pre-prod. in US. Lists producers seeking talent & services for upcoming films. $39.95/yr. Sample: $5. National Film Sources, 10 E. 39 St., #1017, NYC 10016; (800) 222-3844, credit card orders.

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Feature film in initial stages of pre-production seeking actors & full crew: production manager, director of photography, sound, special FX, makeup, etc. Send resume & salary requirements to: Highlite, 415 N. 8th Ave., Scranton, PA 18503. Absolutely no phone calls.

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Negative Matching: 16mm, super 16, 35mm. Credits include Jim Jarmusch, Wim Wenders, Lizzie Borden & Bruce Weber. Reliable results at reasonable rates. One White Glove, Tim Brennan, 321 W. 44th St., #411, New York, NY 10036; (212) 265-0787.

Broadcast Quality Editing: Edit from Betacam, 3/4" or 3/4" SP. $99/hr including operator, switcher, slo-mo. 50% discount on DVE for AIVF members. Call HDTV Enterprises, Inc., near Lincoln Center (212) 874-4524.

16mm Flatbeds for Rent: 6-plate flatbeds for rent in your workspace or fully equipped downtown editing room w/ 24-hour access. Cheapest rates in NYC for independent filmmakers. Call Philmaster Productions (212) 873-4470.

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Super 8 24 fps transfers: scene-by-scene color correction w/ CCD telecine, Sony 700 Color Corrector w/ hue, phase, gamma comp, neg-pos reversing, b&w tinting, etc., Tascam & Dolby C. $1-3/min. 1/2", 3/4" & 3/4" SP + stock, $25/min. Gerard Yates (203) 359-8992.

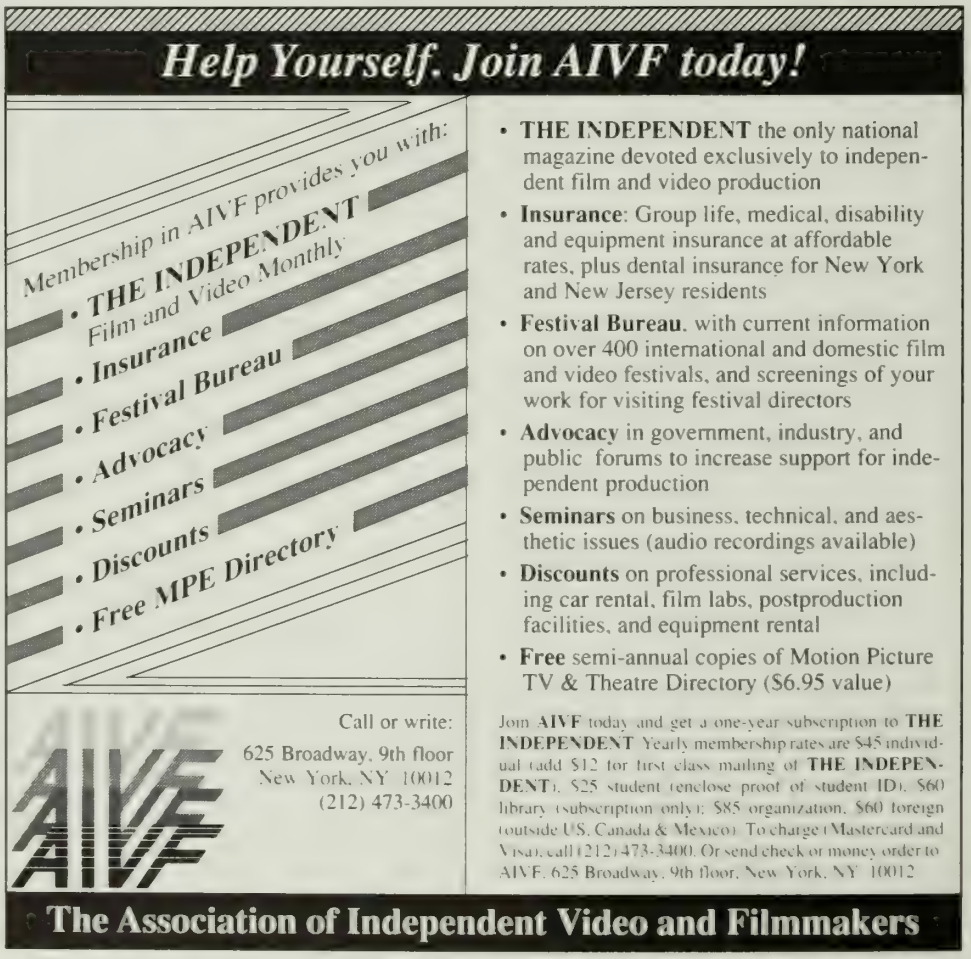
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# NOTICES

**Notices** are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. **The Independent** reserves the right to edit for length.

Deadlines for **Notices** will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date, e.g., May 8 for the July issue. Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

## Conferences • Workshops

YELLOWSTONE SUMMER FILM/VIDEO INSTITUTE at Montana State Univ. incls workshops, screenings & group sessions. Credit or noncredit registration. Scriptwriting, June 12-23; Directing, June 19-23; Native Amer. Film & Video, June 26-30; Autobiographical & Personal Film, June 26-30; Scandinavian Film & TV, June 26-July 7. Contact: Extended Studies, Montana State Univ., Bozeman, MT 59717; (406) 994-6683.

6TH ANNUAL ATLANTIC FILM & VIDEO PRODUCERS CONFERENCE: June 22, 25 at Stanhope-by-the-Sea, Prince Edward Island, Canada, sponsored by Island Media Arts Co-op. Conf. provides forum for ind. producers in Atlantic region of Canada to meet w/ reps from industry in N. Amer. and abroad. Seminars incl. distribution, publicity, script development & regional industry development & resources. Contact: Peter Richards, Coordinator, Atlantic Film & Video Producers Conf., Box 2726, Charlottetown, PEI, Canada, C1A 8C3; Tel: (902) 892-3131; Fax: (902) 566-1724.

GRANT PROPOSAL WRITING: Grantsmanship Center offers 3-day "total immersion workshop" in program planning & proposal writing. Tuition: $395; w/ $50 discount for additional registrant from same agency. Contact: Program Registrar, Grantsmanship Ctr., 650 So. Spring St., Ste. 507; Box 6210, Los Angeles, CA 90014; (800) 421-9512; (213) 689-9222.

ARTS MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE provides training to staff & board members of arts orgs, incl. budgeting, fundraising, human resources mgmt., marketing, planning & studies of boards. Fee: $500 incl. lodging, meals & sessions. Scholarships avail. for N. Carolina applicants. Contact: Arts Mgmt Institute, Extension & Continuing Educ., CB#3420 Abernathy Hall, UNC-Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC 27599-3420.

NAT'L ASSN. OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS OFFICERS & ADVISORS 1989 Regional Conferences: Portland, OR, May 4-6; Albany, NY, June 8-10. Contact: NATOA Regional Telecommunications Conf., Nat'l League of Cities, 1301 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20004; (202) 626-3160.

MAKING A GOOD SCRIPT GREAT: 2-day seminar on successful scriptwriting led by Linda Seger & sponsored by Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Univ. Outreach. Participants learn to build story structure, ideas & characters while giving clarity to writing. Held in Dallas, June 3-4. Fee: $165. Contact: University Outreach; (414) 227-3236.

MEDIA TRAINING AT FILM/VIDEO ARTS: Prof. instruction in all areas of film & video prod. on beginning & intermediate levels, incl. 16mm film prod., 16mm film editing, video prod., video editing, screenwriting, directing, fundraising, prod. mgmt & intro to digital effects. Scholarships avail. for Blacks, Latinos, Asians & Native Americans residing in NYS. Contact: Media Training, F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9361.

FAST REWIND: ARCHAEOLOGY OF MOVING IMAGES, a 4-day int'l conference on moving image preservation & application, May 4-7 in Rochester, NY. Panels & presentations on preservation, research, teaching, exchanging, financing & sharing. Contact: Rochester Institute of Technology, College of Liberal Arts, Bruce Austin, 1 Lomb Memorial Dr., Box 9887, Rochester, NY 14623-0887; (716) 475-6649.

INT'L EXPERIMENTAL FILM CONGRESS in Toronto will feature screenings, panels & presentations on avant-garde cinema. Programs incl. founding women of avant-garde, Hollis Frampton retro, nat'l prgms from Canada, W. Germany, E. Europe, Latin America, Europe. May 28-June 4. Contact: Jim Shedden, Int'l Experimental Film Congress, 2 Sussex Ave., Toronto, Ont. M5S 1J5, Canada; (416) 978-7790/588-8940.

CULTURAL COUNCIL FOUNDATION announces free consulting "clinics" for nonprofit arts groups in NYC. Staff specializes in areas such as fundraising, organizational devel., publicity, accounting & others. By appt only. Contact: Jenny Avery; (212) 473-5660.

NYU SCHOOL OF CONTINUING EDUCATION film & video Saturday workshops: May 8, Making a Living as a Director; May 13, Getting a Job in Film and Video. Day-long seminars held at New York University. Tuition $90, plus $10 registration fee. For registration form, contact: Dept. of Film, Video and Broadcasting, NYU SCE, 50 West 4th St. #332, New York, NY 10003; (212) 998-7140.

INTERNATIONAL MEETING of Latin American independent videomakers, June 19-23, Cochabamba, Bolivia. South and N. Americans will meet to discuss on-going efforts to organize int'l union of ind./community videomakers. For info, write: Cochabomba 89, Casilla 4344, Cochabomba, Bolivia; tel: 042-49971; telex: 6267 INEDER bv. Or call Martha Wallner at Deep Dish TV (212) 420-9045.

## Films • Tapes Wanted

INDEPENDENT ACQUISITION FUND COMPETITION seeking 3/4", 1/2" Beta & VHS, or 16mm works, all genres, for broadcast on WHYY TV-Philadelphia. Offering $14/min. or $75 for works under 5 min. Competition open to residents of PA, DE & NJ w/ works completed since Jan. 1, 1987. Entries must be labeled w/ name, address, length & title. Incl. check or money order for return postage (insured) and shipping container. Deadline: May 19. For complete info, contact Terri Chesmar at: Independent Acquistion Fund, WHYY TV12, 150 N. Sixth St., Philadelphia, PA 19106; (215) 351-1200.

CINEMATHEQUE seeks interesting, unusual, mundane, humorous &/or provocative segments of narrative, doc., industrial, educ., commercial, etc. slug & found footage for upcoming "raw found footage" program. Segments may be up to 15 min., either entire films or segments excerpted intact. Reedited films & films using found footage not acceptable. $2/min. paid to all accepted entries w/ $10 minimum. Contact: San Francisco Cinematheque, 480 Potrero Ave., San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 558-8129.

TOMPKINS SQUARE ARTS FESTIVAL seeks videotapes to show at 12th annual event, June 17 & 18. Screenings will be held outdoors in park. Submit 3/4" or VHS w/ SASE to: T.S.A.F. Video, 221 Ave. B #3, New York, NY 10009.

## Opportunities • Gigs

ASST. PRODUCER sought for NYC short film fest. held annually at FIT's Haft Auditorium. Position nonpaying at present but negotiations w/ potential sponsorship now underway. Looking for creative person to oversee production of entertaining independent nat'l showcase, now in 8th year. Contact: Asbury Film Festival, 21 E. 26th St., New York, NY 10010; (212) 779-9126.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF sought for established monthly publication of nonprofit film organization. Periodical editorial experience & film knowledge required. Send resumé & samples to: Editor, 5550 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 204, Los Angeles, CA 90036.

## Publications

SUPER 8 PRODUCER JOURNAL: 1st vol., published Feb. 1989, now avail. Features info. on equipment, vendors, aesthetics, production & business of super 8 film. Subscriptions free, but donations accepted. Contact: Mike Apsey, S-8 Producer Journal, 3909 W. Rogers Ave., Tampa, FL 33611; (813) 839-1943.

MEDIA EXCHANGE: New newsletter from Pittsburgh Filmmakers in cooperation w/ Access Video & Univ. of Pittsburgh Film Studies Dept. now avail. & seeking info. on all facets of film, video & photographic arts incl. conferences, workshops, classes, prof. & academic opportunities, fests, contests, exhibitions & other publications. Send info to: Media Exchange, c/o Pittsburgh Filmmakers, 205 Oakland Ave., Box 7467, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

## Resources • Funds

BAY AREA film- & videomakers will be awarded 17 grants totalling $45,000 from the Film Arts Foundation. Must be resident of 9-country San Francisco Bay Area. Awards in 3 cats: short personal works, project development, completion/distribution. Deadline: May 19. For appl., contact: FAF, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 552-8760.

ASTREA FOUNDATION: Funds for women's orgs in PA, NY, NJ, RI, DC, MD, MA, DE & CT. Will consider media projects designed to serve as educ. & organizing tools to promote progressive social change. Grants from $500-5,000. Deadline: May 31. Appl. from Astrea Foundation, 666 Broadway, Ste. 610, New York, NY 10012; (212) 529-8021.

1989-90 FULBRIGHT GRANTS avail. for US faculty in fields of communications & journalism. Openings in many countries still avail. PhD or teaching experience, evidence of scholarly productivity & US citizenship

required. Contact: Council for Int'l Exchange of Scholars, 11 Dupont Circle, Ste. 300, Washington, DC 20036-1257.

GRANTS FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY ARTISTS administered by DiverseWorks & Southwest Alternative Media Project. Provides funds for artists whose activities fuse different disciplines, w/ grants of up to $5,000. Open to artists who are not full-time students & have resided for at least one yr in TX, OK, AK, NE, KS, or MS. Funding provided by Rockefeller Foundation & NEA. Deadline: May 1. Contact: GPIA, DiverseWorks, 214 Travis St., Houston, TX 77002; (713) 223-8346 or 522-8592.

MIDATLANTIC ARTS FOUNDATION Visual Arts Residency grants avail. for 1990/91 projects. Supports residencies by indiv. artists & prof. art critics. Deadline: July 14. Contact: MidAtlantic Arts Foundation, 11 E. Chase St., Ste. 2A, Baltimore, MD 21202; (301) 539-6656.

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ALASKA STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS Project Grant deadline May 1 & Nov. 1. Contact: ASCA, 619 Warehouse Ave., Ste. 220, Anchorage, AK 99501-1682; (907) 279-1558.

INTERMEDIA ARTS MEDIA ARTS PRODUCTION AWARDS of equipment & facilities usage & support to artists working in video, electronic music, computer graphics, animation & performance. Awards based on submitted proposals for creation or production of whole or partial projects. 6 to 10 awards given annually. Appl. deadlines: May 1, Aug. 1 & Nov. 1. Individual emerging or professional artists or groups of collaborating artists eligible, w/ no residential requirements. Contact: Intermedia Arts, 425 Ontario St., SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 627-4444.

FILM REGRANTS FOR WESTERN NEW YORK FILMMAKERS Grants ranging from $1-2,000 awarded to independents from Alleghany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Monroe, Livingston, Niagara, Orleans, or Wyoming Counties. Grants are for development, production &/or postproduction of specific film projects. Deadline: May 15. For appl. contact: Jurgen Bruning or Andreas Wildfang, Hallwalls, (716) 854-5828.

## Trims & Glitches

KUDOS to Cindy Marshall whose videotape *A Life of Song: A Portrait of Ruth Rubin* earned the 1988 Streisand Video Award & Chris Bronze Award.

CONGRATS to Peter Chow, who received a 1989 Steven Tatsukawa Memorial Award.

ANNETTE BARBIER was awarded a $5,000 fellowship from Illinois Arts Council for a multimonitor installation using videos of women working in India. Congratulations!

KUDOS to Eric Scholl, whose video *Electricity* was a prize-winner at California's Mill Valley fest for independent videos.

CONGRATULATIONS to Nancy Savoca, whose film *True Love* won Grand Prize for best dramatic film at the United States Film Festival.

ACADEMY AWARD nominations have gone to AIVF members: for Live Action Shorts: Dean Parisot, *The Appointments of Dennis Jennings*; Gary Moss, *Gullah Tales*; for Feature Documentaries: Ginny Durrin, *Promises to Keep*; Christine Choy & Renee Tajima, *Who Killed Vincent Chin?*; for Documentary Short Subjects: Karen Goodman, *The Children's Storefront*; Lise Yasui & Ann Tegnell, *Family Gathering*; Thomas B. Fleming & Daniel J. Marks, *Gang Cops* & Meg Partridge, *Portrait of Imogen*. Congrats!

KUDOS to AIVF members awarded grants from the New York Council for the Humanities: Jaime Barrios, *The New Crusaders*; Robby Henson, *Trouble Behind*; John Reilly, *Waiting for Beckett*; Victoria Larimore, *Gypsies* & Melvin McCray, *Dollie Robinson: The Woman & Her Times*.

1989 WINNERS of Intercultural Film/Video Fellowships from the Rockefeller Foundation are Tony Buba, Julie Dash, Gary Hill, Yvonne Rainer, Leslie Thornton, St. Clair Bourne, Christine Choy, Ana Maria Garcia, Jill Godmilow, Richard Gordon & Marlon Riggs. Kudos!

WINNERS of the 1989 Jimmie Media Awards from the Association of Asian/ Pacific American Artists include Christine Choy & Renee Tajima, & Peter Chow. Congratulations!


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# PROGRAM NOTES

## Ethan Young
***Membership/Programming Director***

It happens every spring. AIVF members get a chance to elect half of our board of directors for another two-year term. The 12-member board is the central decision-making body of the Association. Its composition reflects the members' spectrum of views on the direction of the organization and the quality of services we provide. This year, five seats on the board will be voted upon; next year it will be six. Executive director Lawrence Sapadin remains an *ex officio* member.

Each potential candidate must be nominated and seconded by AIVF members in good standing, either through the mail or at the annual membership meeting in New York City. The candidates are then presented to current members (student members excluded) on a ballot that includes a statement from each candidate explaining her or his views on issues facing independents and AIVF in the coming years. Each member may vote for five candidates on the list; the two runners-up serve as alternates in the event a board member steps down.

The board meets four times a year in New York. Board committees focus on advocacy (including AIVF's contribution to the organizing efforts for the Independent Production Service for public television and tax reform); membership/public relations; and the Indie awards. Readers will be informed of the outcome of the election in the "Memoranda" column later this year.

□ □ □

FIVF's Seminar Program is spreading out. FIVF was formed as an educational arm of AIVF back in the seventies. Until now, our regular public events remained anchored near our Manhattan office by budget and staff limitations. But in recent months, we have presented a number of programs in other cities through cosponsorship with local and regional independent groups and media arts centers.

Kathryn Bowser, who heads our Festival Bureau, travelled to San Francisco in April to take part in a panel at Film Arts Foundation. In May, she'll be on a panel with producer Aviva Kempner and critic Pat Aufderheide at the Washington, D.C. Filmfest. And in June, Kathryn will be speaking to Boston independents, cosponsored by Boston Film/Video Foundation. FIVF also cosponsored several events with Squeaky Wheel in Buffalo. If you would like to involve AIVF members in an event in your area, give us a call at (212) 473-3400.


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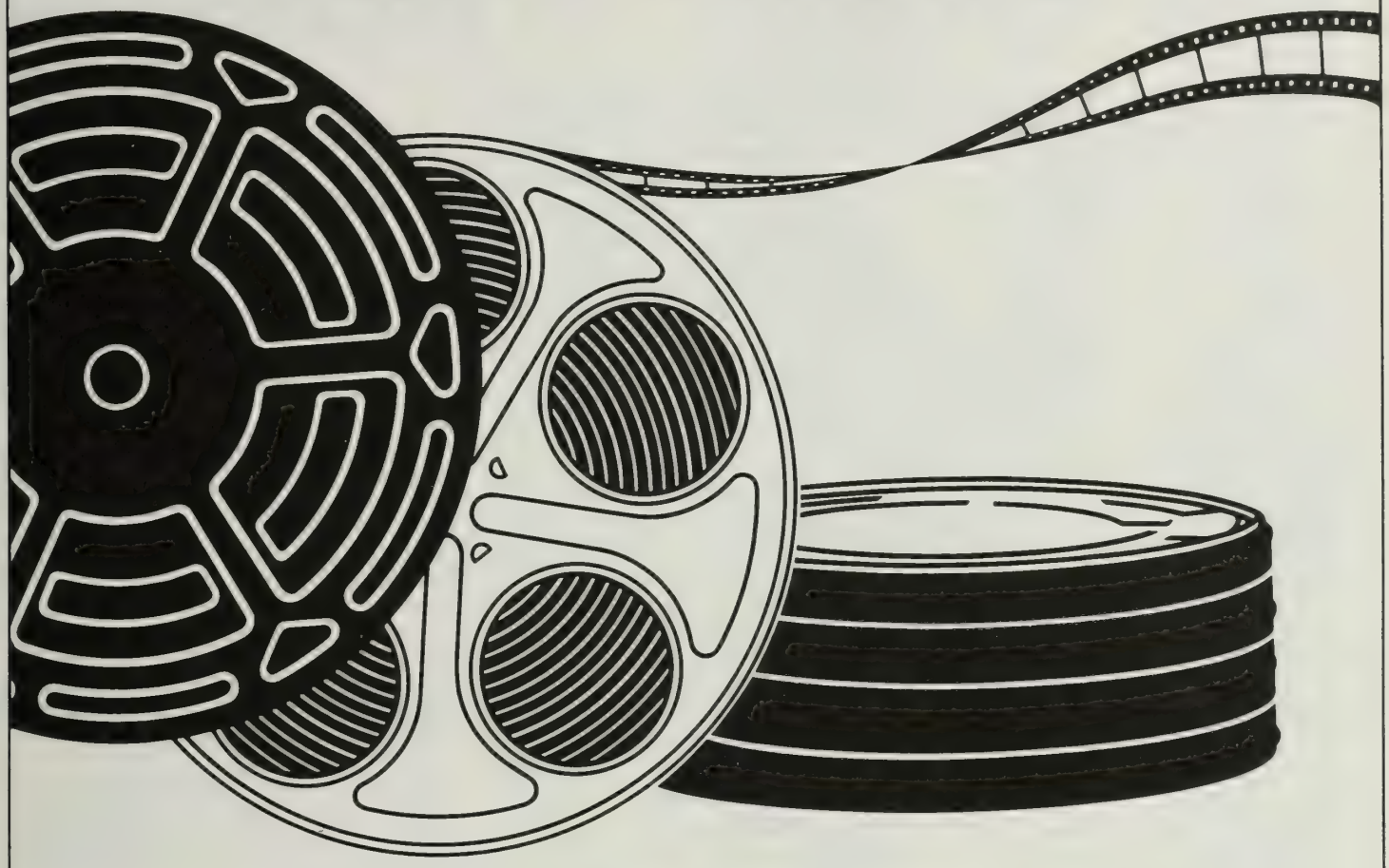
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COVER: A history teacher and her husband listen to a news flash before the outbreak of World War II in Alexander Kluge's film *Die Patriotin* (*The Female Patriot*, 1979). Kluge's numerous films and theoretical writings have played a central role in the development of New German Cinema. In this issue, Karen Rosenberg reviews two newly translated books on this influential film movement plus a new volume of Kluge's fiction. This is followed by an in-depth interview with Kluge, conducted on the occasion of a retrospective of his film and television work organized by the Goethe Institutes of the United States and Canada. Photograph courtesy filmmaker.

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**AIVF/FIVF STAFF MEMBERS:** Lawrence Sapadin, executive director; Ethan Young, membership/ programming director; Kathryn Bowser, festival bureau director; Morton Marks, audio/business manager; Sol Horwitz, Short Film Showcase project administrator; Kelly Anderson, administrative assistant.

# THE LONG GOODBYE: CALIFORNIA PUBLIC ACCESS FOUNDATION FOLDS

While casualties of the 1984 Cable Communications Policy Act—which codified a number of deregulation measures—are usually counted in terms of rate increases or channels dropped, there is a recent institutional fatality that can be added to the toll. As of December 31, 1988, California's public access resource center, the Foundation for Community Service Cable Television, closed its doors due to discontinued funding.

The foundation was launched in 1979 under Governor Jerry Brown's administration as part of a compromise reached between cable operators pressing for deregulation and public interest advocates. A state law allowed cable operators to be deregulated in exchange for certain provisions, including the contribution of 50 cents per subscriber annually to the newly established foundation. But when the federal Cable Act went into effect in 1986, it superceded state law, allowing cable operators to withdraw their support for the foundation while enjoying the benefits of deregulation. The foundation managed to survive through last year on alternative sources of income, such as fees for services, but this was insufficient to keep it alive any longer.

The foundation helped nurture public access throughout California in numerous ways. For example, by providing funds for a training program, they helped transform the Office of Telecommunications in Los Angeles "from a government bureaucracy to getting the community involved," according to Evelyn Pine, the foundation's deputy director and editor of its quarterly newsletter *Cable Scan*. The foundation coached communities through the transition from cable-run access centers to ones run by nonprofit corporations. Executive director Kathleen Schuler made frequent trips around the state to educate and advise city officials, community groups, schools, and others about the potential of public access. Information services were also available over the phone. Its publications—*Cable Scan* and the resource guides *Local Government and Cable Television* and *Community Channels, Free Speech and the Law*—also provided valuable tools. Perhaps most important was the foundation's grant-making program, through which all revenues from cable operators were channeled back into the communities. A total of $1-million in public access programming grants were awarded to 306 projects of local nonprofit groups and government agencies.

The foundation also developed a national profile through its Videotape Exchange, a database listing and catalogue of over 600 public access programs and distributors, which was used by programmers and producers. While initially focusing on California, the demand for such a database from beyond the state borders was quickly felt, and the Videotape Exchange grew to incorporate programs from all over the country. "That's the way a lot of people learned about *Deep Dish Television*," says Martha Wallner, one of the New York coordinators of *Deep Dish*'s national satellite network for public access programming.

Although the foundation has closed, it leaves behind its publications, database, and other progeny. Evelyn Pine recalls, "When the foundation started, there were few surviving access centers in California. What it did was involve 80 to 100 local groups in access, getting them to provide information about access or manage access channels. These are our children and grandchildren, and they are the most important part of our work." The Videotape Exchange will continue as an active program, now under management of the Far West Region of the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers (NFLCP). "We are currently developing a realistic approach to handling it," says the region's chairperson Deborah Vinsel. Because the NFLCP is an all-volunteer organization, she cautions, they might lack the personnel to provide the level of service that the foundation did, such as honoring requests for lists of videotapes on specific topics. However, at their April meeting the NFLCP-Far West Region board of directors resolved to undertake a "major marketing push" and an updated edition of the Community Programming Catalogue by the end 1989.

The foundation's remaining funds, in excess of $60,000, will be turned over to the California Channel, a nonprofit group developing a satellite-delivered public affairs network. As currently planned, the California Channel will take the shape of a statewide C-SPAN, providing unedited coverage of the state legislature, a nightly newscast, interviews and call-ins, and additional public affairs programming. As outlined in the final issue of *Cable Scan*, "Both tape exchanges and bicycles suffer from being very time-intensive and fragmented. The Foundation is now making an investment in the only viable proposal for a statewide satellite distribution system that has emerged over the last six years...which we feel will make a major contribution to local access

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channels and will encourage greater dialogue within California."

For information on the Videotape Exchange, contact: Deb Vinsel, 2575 #F Elden Ave., Costa Mesa, CA 92627; (714) 680-8842. For copies of the foundation's publications, contact: Kathleen Schuler, 3015 Turk St., San Francisco, CA 94118; (415) 387-0200. For information on California Cable, contact: Tracy Westen, president or Paul Koplin, executive director, California Channel, 10951 W. Pico Blvd., 3rd fl., Los Angeles, CA 90064; (213) 475-1015.

PATRICIA THOMSON

## THE NEA'S CURRICULUM FOR CREATIVITY

Back in 1982, the National Endowment for the Arts was disturbed to find that a recent study concluded that 61 percent of adults in the U.S. hadn't attended a single performance of classical music, jazz, opera, theater, ballet, or visited a single museum or gallery. These findings shocked the Endowment into shifting its priorities, and early in his reign as chair of the agency Reagan-appointee Frank Hodsoll halted a plan already in motion to phase out the NEA's Arts in Education program. The decision to shelve the program had been devised as a response to the severe budget cuts instituted during Reagan's first years in office.

Further studies conducted by the NEA indicated that the average teenager spends more time in front of the TV than in the classroom. With this in mind, the NEA has slowly increased its support for education programs, and in fiscal year 1989 the agency allocated $5.6-million to arts education. To complement these efforts, in May 1988 Hodsoll's office issued an extensive report on the NEA's education policies entitled *Towards Civilization*, a document emphasizing the need for a reevaluation of the role of arts education within U.S. public schools. The push to expand NEA influence over arts curricula is partly rationalized by a comparison contained in the report: the NEA "spends 3.3 percent of its current budget on its Arts Education Program, compared to 12.8 percent of the Humanities Endowment's budget for humanities education and just over 5 percent of the Science Foundation's much larger budget for science education."

*Towards Civilization* includes a long list of arts courses in need of expansion and refinement, among which media arts is identified as a subject that should be a required course for both primary and secondary school students. "Were young people better able to distinguish the good from the bad in popular culture, they might influence what the media gave them, since the media responds to what audiences demand," the authors of *Towards Civilization* write, continuing, "But audience demand for a wider variety of fare depends on acquiring, through learning, a taste for different experiences...the ability to understand the more complex vocabularies...of great art."

It follows, then, that one of the ways the NEA plans to use television is as a means to influence arts education. And, to that end in 1985, they earmarked funds for the production of a 13-part series geared towards eight- to-12-year-olds and intended for broadcast on public television. Enter the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, whose partnership in this project was reported several years ago in *The Independent* ("The Economics of Art Education 101," in "Media Clips," September 1985). According to Vicki Rosenberg, project manager at the Getty, the series—entitled *Behind the Scenes*—is being jointly produced by Educational Broadcasting (the nonprofit that runs WNET, the New York City public television station) and Learning Designs, a private production company.

At present, Middlemarch Films, a New York City production company contracted by Learning Designs, has produced two pilot programs for the series. One of the series' executive producers, Jane Garvey at Learning Designs, says that the entire 13 programs could be completed and ready for broadcast in the fall or winter of 1991. She also explained that by August 1989 the NEA should make a decision concerning release of the funds that will allow completion of the project. If all goes according to schedule, the series will continue production and eventually encompass segments on dance, music, theater, and the visual arts.

Viewed by Endowment staff and the producers as an intervention amid the dearth of effective materials for arts education, *Behind the Scenes* represents a major shift in NEA policy in the hopes of informing a population of young people who have never heard of Mozart but know all about Michael Jackson and Kenny Rogers. By the time the *Toward Civilization* report was published, the NEA had invested approximately $1.9-million in the pilots—a sum that covered both production costs and extensive research and testing of the programs' efficacy. So far, the NEA's share of funding for the series has come largely from the Media Arts Program. But none of the programs slated for production will treat media as an art.

Don Johnson, a *Behind the Scenes* producer at WNET, explaines that the program pilots are still being in the research and testing phase of development and not ready for public release. Middlemarch supplied *The Independent* with a copy of one of the series pilots, *Behind the Scenes with David Hockney*. The show features a brightly colored montage of fast-paced visuals, used to illustrate a discussion of perception, perspective, and "tricks of the eye." The audience is introduced to the British painter as someone who is interested in visual perception in a unique way. Hockney proceeds to draw a "walkaround" chair, an object that can be viewed from many perspectives simultaneously. With this device, he confounds the descriptions of spatial representation, vanishing points, horizon lines, and other visual phenomena that are

# Nestor Almendros ASC



© Eastman Kodak Company, 1989 Photo: Michelle Bogre

## on film:

"Our film 'Nobody Listened' is the story told by Cuban political exiles about human rights violations in their country. Because the film is a documentary, I didn't want any arty lighting. Most of the time we used available light or just a single soft light. I wanted the audience to be able to see the eyes of the people we interviewed. Their eyes are the mirrors of their souls. We couldn't have made this movie without today's 'fast' 16 mm Eastman color negative film. I wanted to be able to blow the negative up to 35 mm prints so it could be seen in theaters without losing contrast, increasing grain, or altering colors. When the film was shown, very few people could tell it was shot in 16 mm."

*Nestor Almendros, ASC, won an Oscar for "Days of Heaven." Other credits include "Kramer vs. Kramer," "The Blue Lagoon," "The Last Metro," "Sophie's Choice," and "Places in the Heart." "Nobody Listened" won a 1988 Distinguished Achievement Award from the International Documentary Association.*

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presented in other segments of the program.

If this episode is any indication, the series will not employ any pedagogical methods that entail involvement in art-making on the part of the audience. There is no attempt, for instance, to encourage children to use video equipment to make their own television programs or create their own "walkaround" furniture. Although media education programs such as that conceived and administered by Film in the Cities in Minneapolis are heralded in *Towards Civilization* as exemplary, as yet there is no NEA-funded initiative to encourage such programs on a national scale.

Meanwhile, Hodsoll has been appointed executive associate director and chief financial officer of the Office of Management and Budget under President Bush. The NEA he left never was and still is not an education agency, so it will continue to put an emphasis on state and local educators' efforts to design their own arts curricula. But, in both the *Towards Civilization* document and the *Behind the Scenes* television series, a comprehensive and sustained educational program aimed at children has been officially endorsed. The consequences of this initiative remain ambiguous, however, when calls for liberalization are accompanied by statements such as, "Arts education also has practical importance. Understanding the cultures of other countries helps American business succeed in world markets and acts as a stimulus to the creativity and problem-solving which are essential to competitiveness." Toward civilization?

RAY NAVARRO

## ABC-CLIO PLANS NEW VIDEO GUIDE FOR LIBRARIES

"Independent productions are the hardest things for librarians to find out about," says Beth Blenz-Clucas, which is one of the motivating factors behind the launch of a new quarterly publication, *Video Rating Guide for Libraries*. In addition to the sole reference book on special interest videotapes, the American Library Association's *Video for Libraries*, librarians currently rely on wholesale catalogues to learn about titles, according to the guide's managing editor Blenz-Clucas. The new serial publication "is a great opportunity for independent producers to get their names and titles in front of people buying video for libraries." She elaborates, "Librarians are increasingly talking about their informational role. For a while they were trying to compete with home video stores and were buying popular feature films. Now, more and more are buying special interest videos."

*Video Rating Guide for Libraries* will be a quarterly publication consisting of 300-400 word reviews, ratings, and distribution information on recently released special interest films or videos available on VHS. The reviews will be written by a pool of approximately 200 librarians and university professors who are specialists in the field under consideration. The first issue, due out in January 1990, will cover works released in 1989. Blenz-Clucas expects to review approximately 2,000 tapes in the first year. "We're going to try to be as comprehensive as possible," she says. While *Video Rating Guide for Libraries* will concentrate on current releases, Blenz-Clucas indicates there may also be a retrospective issue at some point.

Special interest videotapes run a wide gamut, from pet training to computers to sports. Excluded from the *Video Rating Guide for Libraries* are "feature films, popular music videos, promotional videos, and highly technical or industry-specific videos," according to the application guidelines. There are numerous program categories that many independent productions would fall within, including documentaries, social issues, ethnic/racial studies, politics/government, global studies, history, and art. The editors intend to include a substantial section on children's programming, which is where fictional shorts and animation will be included, if appropriate.

The publisher of *Video Rating Guide for Libraries* is ABC-Clio, a 35-year-old publishing company specializing in serial bibliographies and reference books on the humanities and social sciences. (ABC is the acronym for the American Bibliographic Center, and Clio refers to the muse of history.) The company's first foray into video, the 1988 book *Developing and Maintaining Video*





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*Collections in Libraries*, by James C. Scholtz, elicited such demand, says Blenz-Clucas, that ABC-Clio concluded there was a need to delve further into the field.

Because of potential problems with copyright clearances, Blenz-Clucas prefers hearing directly from producers rather than their distributors and suggests producers put her on their mailing lists. Producers interested in having their VHS works listed in the guide should contact Beth Blenz-Clucas for application forms and further information at *Video Rating Guide for Libraries*, ABC-Clio, 130 Cremona Drive, Santa Barbara, CA 93117; (800) 422-2546.

PT

## KEYES EXITS NEW YORK STATE GOVERNOR'S FILM/TV OFFICE

After serving six years as commissioner of the New York State Governor's Office for Motion Picture and Television Development, Jaynne Keyes has abdicated her post. Keyes spent a total of seven and a half years with the Governor's Office. Initially acting as associate director in 1979, she left for a brief sojourn in cable television but returned in 1983 to become commissioner. During her tenure in that job, production in the state increased 400 percent.

Keyes says that her decision to leave was prompted by her desire to produce a project of her own. "I found a book I really liked," she explains. Under the auspices of her newly-formed independent company Outta This Place Productions, Keyes is preparing to produce a script based on Florence Keans' book *When Sisterhood Was in Flower*, a comedy about the feminist movement set in the seventies.

The change of hats should present few problems for Keyes, since she has six years' experience working with producers. "I'm tired of bringing everybody else's film in on budget. Now I want to bring my own in," she comments. Although a seasoned professional, Keyes expresses apprehension about her venture. "It's very exciting and at the same time scary," she says. As for financing the film, Keyes plans to package it and offer it to the studios.

LORNA JOHNSON

## SEQUELS

The concept of **moral rights** held by creators of intellectual property, a keystone of copyright law in Western Europe but not in the United States, is again creating anxiety among motion picture producers and television executives while giving encouragement to film and TV directors, writers, and other artists ["The Limits of Copyright: Moral Rights and the Berne Convention," May 1988]. A March 15 report to the House Subcommittee on Copyrights, prepared by the Copyright Office of the Library of Congress, exploring the issue of colorization, scanning and panning, and electronic time compression or expansion recommended that the principal director and screenwriter of a film be accorded moral rights in the work. That means material alterations in the work, such as colorization, would require their consent. However, the report also advised that such measures be applied to new works only, thereby more or less neglecting the primary targets of colorization—vintage black and white Hollywood movies—since the Fifth Amendment prohibits the public seizure of private property without just compensation, the report commented. Additionally, the Copyright Office's report considers the possibility of moral rights claims by composers, novelists, and other creators who contribute to motion picture production. Potentially, such claims could pit members of the Directors Guild of America, major proponents of moral rights, against fellow artists.

□ □ □

The case of ***Erie Telecommunications, Inc. vs. City of Erie*** finally closed, when the Pennsylvania city's victory was unheld on appeal ["Cable Company Loses in Erie," July 1987]. The dispute, which began in 1985, questioned the legality of franchise fees and public access requirements, which the cable company Erie Telecommunications argued were both unconstitutional. The Court of Appeals decided in favor of the city on contractual grounds—leaving the constitutional question unresolved. Erie Telecommunications does not plan to appeal.

□ □ □

When Billboard Publications took over ***American Film*** a year ago, this consumer magazine was considered an ideal complement to BPI's newly acquired trade publication *Hollywood Reporter* ["American Film Goes West," October 1988]. In the April 1989 issue of *American Film*, a note from the publisher informed readers that henceforth "the monthly *Hollywood Reporter Magazine* will be incorporated into the newly refocused and redesigned *American Film*."

□ □ □

In recent job moves, **Linda Farin** joins San Francisco's Frameline as executive director, while the group's former head, **Michael Lumpkin**, will take over the new position of program director and continue to act as director of the annual International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, which Frameline presents. The Benton Foundation has a new executive director, **Larry Kirkman**. Previously Kirkman founded the Labor Institute of Public Affairs, the TV arm of the AFL-CIO, and also set up the TV and Film Department of the American Film Institute, where he initiated the National Video Festival. The Philadelphia Independent Film/Video Association has a new coordinator and *Express Exchange* editor, independent producer **Yvette Nieves-Cruz**.


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# THE WRONG MAN: *THE THIN BLUE LINE* AND JUSTICE IN DALLAS



**The roadside murder of Officer Robert Wood was reenacted in *The Thin Blue Line*. Errol Morris' documentary film on the miscarriage of justice brought Randall Adams' case to national attention.**

Photo: Mark Lipson

Patricia Thomson

When the documentary feature *The Thin Blue Line* opened in Dallas late last summer, it was featured on all the local TV news shows and in all the newspapers. Subsequently *The CBS Evening News*, *PM Magazine*, *20/20*, and other national news programs picked up the story or, in the case of the tabloid TV show *The Reporters*, simply stole it. "*The Thin Blue Line* got as much news attention as *Rain Man*," says its producer, Mark Lipson, without exaggeration. The news reports told about how the Wall Street private investigator-turned-filmmaker Errol Morris uncovered a gross miscarriage of justice in Dallas that kept an innocent man behind bars for 12 years and nearly sent him to the electric chair.

Morris first came to Dallas in 1985 to do research for a film on Dr. James Grigson, also known as "Dr. Death," a controversial psychiatrist who evaluated the sanity of convicted felons and routinely found them fit to be executed. Randall Adams, who was convicted in 1977 for the murder of police officer Donald Wood, was one of Grigson's subjects whom Morris interviewed. The deeper Morris got into Adams' story, the more he was convinced that he was innocent. Morris then set aside his original project and made *The Thin Blue Line*, which focuses on Adams' case. In the film, the man who fingered Adams, David Harris, now on death row for a subsequent murder, reverses his original testimony. He states Adams didn't kill Wood and stops just short of a confession.

As the story was making national news, a grassroots effort to help Adams took shape. People leaving theaters showing *The Thin Blue Line* in New York City and Dallas were met by volunteers with clipboards and petitions from the Free Randall Adams Campaign. Across the country, theater managers posted petitions and thousands of letters poured into the offices of the Texas district attorney, governor, and parole board.

About seven months after the film's opening, Adams was released from prison, his conviction overturned because of a judge's ruling that he received an unfair trial. That night he appeared on *Nightline*, and Ted Koppel expressed what many people were thinking: "It's a curious way to have come to where you are tonight—to be freed, in effect, because of a movie." From the public's point of view, it certainly seemed as if the theatrical release of *The Thin Blue Line* and the accompanying publicity brought about the evidentiary hearing that began on November 30, 1988, and overturned Adams' conviction. But, in fact, the entangled relationship between Errol Morris' film and Randall Adams' legal battle is far more complicated and occurred over a period of years, not months.

"Can we say that because of the film there was a hearing? Technically, no," says Lipson. "They don't see a movie coming out and decide to have a hearing. In Shirley Temple movies maybe, but not in the legal system." The hearing last fall was just one more chapter in a long history of appeals that can be traced back to the original trial in 1977. However, in this hearing Morris presented new information that he had turned up, and that did have a profound impact on the eventual outcome of the case. In researching Adams' conviction, Morris uncovered a number of facts which he eventually shared with Adams' appeals attorney, Randy Schaffer, and presented directly to the court in film clips and documents—first in a federal hearing in December 1986 and January 1987, then again in the state hearing in November and December 1988.

"The news media put enormous weight on David Harris' 'confession,'" Morris explains. "But

it's important to realize that's not what this whole case hinged on." Rather, it was the evidence that all of the crucial witnesses had lied on the stand in 1977 and that the prosecuting attorney had suppressed information implicating Harris. Morris gives an abbreviated list of the evidence he unearthed regarding the "surprise witnesses" who identified Adams as Wood's killer. "Emily Miller's admission that she had failed to pick out Randall Adams in a line-up [after saying under oath she had identified him]—that was one of the critical, if not *the* critical, pieces of evidence which led to the reversal of the 1977 conviction in the Texas Court of Appeals. Michael Rendell's admission—that he had been drinking that night [instead of seeing the murderer on his way home from playing basketball], that he had been partying, cheating on his wife—was a new piece of evidence." So, too, was information detailing the Dallas police force's Internal Affairs Department's investigation into the conduct of officer Teresa Turko, partner of the murdered policeman, revealing her testimony to be perjured. Morris managed to get access to the district attorney's private files, which contained handwritten notes by prosecuting attorney Doug Mulder, internal police documents, affidavits—"material which had never really seen the light of day, let alone been shown to Randall Adams' defense attorney. There were many, many crucial pieces of evidence in that file," says Morris. Among them were documents indicating Mulder had distorted testimony and even committed perjury and that deals had been struck between the DA's office and the attorney for Emily Miller, with robbery charges against her daughter being dropped after the conclusion of Adams' trial.

Would any of this evidence have been uncovered by Adams' defense attorney had Morris not come along? No one can say with certainty. "I can't quite imagine someone, unless they had a single-minded determination, would actually follow all the leads in this case," says Morris.

But even the proof that the state suppressed evidence favorable to Adams and that perjured evidence was knowingly used was not enough to reverse Adams' conviction. After Federal Magistrate John Tolle conducted the hearing in late 1986, he did not act for 18 months. It wasn't until after the premiere of *The Thin Blue Line* at the Dallas Film Festival on April 30, 1988, and the wave of press attention the film received that Tolle finally issued a ruling. In Morris' view, the timing was anything but coincidental: "When the movie came out, he had no choice but to respond." On May, Friday 13th, Tolle denied Adams a retrial.

During the Dallas Film Festival, Morris had dinner with Adams' original defense attorney, Dennis White. When the subject of Tolle's decision came up, White remembered a significant point: In 1977 he had filed a federal law suit alleging Adam's civil rights had been violated by the conduct of the Dallas district attorney's office and Doug Mulder in particular. It was Tolle, then


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**Randall Adams, whose murder conviction was shown in *The Thin Blue Line* to be the result of perjured testimony and suppressed evidence, is now a free man—thanks in large part to the film and the attention it received.**

Photo: Ned Burgess

assistant district attorney, who defended Mulder. With this information and the 1977 court records to support it, Schaffer filed a reply to Tolle's ruling, revealing the conflict of interest. Eventually Tolle backed down, setting the stage for the state hearing last fall when Judge Larry Baraka set aside Adams' conviction, ruling from the bench only one hour after the evidence had been presented. There will be no retrial. "The film essentially destroyed their case," says Lipson. "It showed they never had the goods on this guy. It was the Emperor's clothing."

Morris had uncovered critical evidence, presented it in court, precipitated Tolle's ruling, and then played a part in uncovering Tolle's conflict of interest—all before *The Thin Blue Line* had its theatrical release. What kind of role did the press and grassroots campaign play?

Jeanne Berney, hired by *The Thin Blue Line*'s distributor, Miramax, to be the film's public relations coordinator for the Southwest, recalls that in 1985 an article about Adams' murder case appeared in the *Texas Monthly*, a widely read magazine. But, according to Berney, who then lived in Dallas, "Nothing happened. It didn't create a wave of interest. It wasn't until Errol Morris' film came out that there began to be a lot of activity." After seeing *The Thin Blue Line* at the Dallas Film Festival, the film critic for the *Dallas Times Herald* "was instrumental in getting the story on the state desk for a real investigation," Berney relates. About that time the *Herald* changed ownership, and, Berney says, "The new editor saw it as an opportunity to make the *Herald* the way it used to be—a champion of the people. So he put a reporter on it full-time and they began to run front-page stories." The *Dallas Morning News* also became a supporter of Adams' cause. By the time of the film's theatrical opening, the *New York Times* was also following the case and the network news shows were bringing it to national attention. Morris credits this barrage of press coverage to the ability of public relations people in Dallas, New York, and Los Angeles to interest both entertainment critics and news editors in the film: "We have this fantasy that publicity comes out of nowhere. Most often it comes out of the hard work of people."

The grassroots campaign came about after Paul Mowry, then on staff at Orion Classics, attended a preview of *The Thin Blue Line*. "I walked out of the screening completely mesmerized and incensed at this injustice," he recalls. Upon learning that there was no organized campaign to help Adams, Mowry decided to set up a clearinghouse for information about the progress of the case. Mowry, joined by Joey Silverman, then organized petitions at theaters showing *The Thin Blue Line*, initiated a letter-writing campaign, and set up a legal defense fund to help Adams' mother with the substantial court costs. This effort has raised about $7,000 to date, and Lipson is currently negotiating with HBO Video about contributing a certain amount from each home video cassette sale to the defense fund. In Morris's estimate, "Paul Mowry played a significant role in all of this, because he was in a way that model concerned citizen who had nothing to gain whatsoever." The Free Randall Adams Campaign resulted in thousands of letters inundating the offices of Judge Baraka and other key players. "This doesn't mean the letters forced him to rule in Randall Adams' favor," Morris states. Publicly, the judge discounted the effect of the letters and downplayed the importance of the film in his decision to overturn Adams' conviction. But they helped change the climate. Says Morris, "I had the evidence to see Randall Adams out of jail in 1985. But that evidence alone unfortunately was not enough to get him out, because you needed someone to look at the evidence, and that wasn't easy to find. Public opinion forced the authorities to look at this evidence."

Repercussions from the film and the overturned conviction are still being felt in Dallas. Assistant district attorney Winfield Scott, who helped prosecute Adams in 1977, resigned abruptly in April. Scott led the effort to keep Adams in jail after Baraka's ruling, going so far as to bring charges of bias against Baraka. This created a backlash of criticism within the legal community and has led to a grand jury investigation into the conduct of the DA's office.

It's not often that a documentary film produces such dramatic results—let alone an independent, feature-length, stylistically innovative documentary. Despite the convincing case in support of Adams' innocence presented in *The Thin Blue Line*, getting those results was neither easy nor inevitable. It entailed not only Morris' years of persistent investigation, but also his involvement in the court hearings, an aggressive publicity campaign pegged on the news value of the film, a responsive press and public, and a fair-minded judge. Remove any of those elements, and things might have worked out differently.

*Contributions to the Free Randall Adams Campaign may still be sent to: Legal Defense Fund, 98 MacDougal Street, #3A, New York, NY 10012.*

# ALIKE IS NOT SIMILAR: COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT COURT CASES

Sheldon Siporin

*[Editor's note: This article is presented only for the purposes of educating independent film/video-makers and is not to be taken as legal advice.]*

You have been trying to come up with a great idea for a romantic thriller appropriate for cable TV or as a short subject entry for Cannes. You happen to pick up a dimestore novel left under your coffee table by some sloppy but convivial bohemian friends. Several years later your coproducer becomes apoplectic at a private party celebrating the release of your latest film, when your bohemian friends tell her you "stole" the idea from an old pulp novel. Suddenly your mind recalls something vague about "copyright infringement." You turn deathly pale. Have you violated the law, let alone basic tenets of morality, by making the film? Maybe, but maybe not. Copyright infringement can be an elusive creature.

A basic rule of copyright law under federal statute is that only the expression of an idea is protected, not the idea itself. Something that merely contains the same generalized idea or theme of a protected work does not invade the copyright. This distinction can be subtle. Therefore, a court investigating a claim of copyright infringement will make a very detailed comparison of the material presented before it. A lawsuit involving a screenplay, film, or video work necessarily involves a close inspection of areas dear to the heart of screenwriters and filmmakers: elements of characterization, theme, mood, plot, and style or presentation.

A well known case that arose several years ago was *Warner Brothers vs. American Broadcasting Corp.* (720 F2d 231), decided by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, which is the New York area federal appellate court. I refer to this case more colloquially as *Superman* vs. *The Greatest American Hero.*

The financially successful *Superman* movies had just come out. ABC television wanted to capitalize on this by creating a television series based on Superboy. ABC approached the owners of the Superman copyright, Warner Brothers, and requested a license to produce *Superboy*, the television show. At that time this was refused. ABC then looked for alternatives. It cut a deal with writer/producer Stephen Cannell to create a series featuring a superhero. The result was *The Greatest American Hero*, a half-hour comedy adventure series about a reluctant and inept protagonist with unusual powers. Warner Brothers was disturbed by this and filed a lawsuit in federal district court claiming that *Hero* infringed on the *Superman* copyright. The district court rejected the claim and Warner Brothers appealed to the Second Circuit.

The key question was the issue of "substantial similarity." This is a legal term of art. "Substantial similarity" indicates that the expression of the idea has been copied. The inquiry made by the court is whether an "average lay observer" would conclude that the alleged "copy" had appropriated the protected work. If this sounds like a vague or tricky concept, it is. (Some legal analysts call "substantial similarity" a "weasel word.") The bedrock of copyright law is imprecision.

The Second Circuit went through an elaborate analysis, first comparing the origins of the two superbeings. Superman, as we all know, is an alien from Krypton who was sent to Earth in a rocket by his father Jor-el (a.k.a. Marlon Brando) during the cataclysm of Krypton. Superman has special powers due to Earth's low gravity and its yellow sun. The Greatest American Hero (Hinkley) is an earthling who was approached by someone from a spaceship and given a magic costume plus instruction booklet, which he lost.

Similarities are numerous. Both characters fly, are invincible to bullets, and have abnormal strength. Both wear tight leotards with chest insignia and flowing cape. The court, continuing its lengthy (though silly sounding) analysis, noted that Superman has a blue leotard with red briefs, boots, and cape, while Hinkley has a red leotard with a tunic top, no boots, and a black cape. Other differences were discussed: "Hinkley has the ability to fly, but does so carrying a large lantern, and on occasion, waves his arms wildly to maintain his course or crashland in a treetop." Hinkley also tended to say such un-Superman-like things as, "I'm Captain Crash. I navigate like I got hit by a can of Raid."

The judges, struggling through this maze of like and unlike elements, finally laid the issue bare: Is this "Superman gone astray or a new addition to the superhero genre?" The court determined that there were no significant similarities of plot or story line (although both battled evildoers), and character was the critical aspect. Judi-

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cial wisdom then viewed the "totality" of attributes and traits, concluding, "The total perception of the Hinkley character is not substantially similar to that of Superman.... Superman looks and acts like a brave proud hero, who has dedicated his life to combating the forces of evil. Hinkley looks and acts like a timid reluctant hero, who accepts his missions grudgingly and prefers to get on with his normal life."

What does this case tell the enterprising writer/filmmaker? Can we simply tally up similarities and differences? ABC clearly was using Superman as a model. The overt intent was to exploit the financial success of Superman. The costumes and powers of the two figures are broadly alike. Both fight on the side of good. However, these are not the only two superheroes in town, as devotees of comic books and Saturday morning television realize. Thus, Hinkley "merely showed some superhuman traits now widely shared by the superhero genre." To classify superheroes as a genre makes it generic—a generalized idea. Thus, where supermen leap and abound, copycats have more leeway to imitate, and the trivial peculiarities of the Superman persona and storyline become the critical indicia of infringement.*

Another significant New York case is *Walker vs. Time Life Films Inc.* (784 F.2d 44), better known as *Fort Apache: The Bronx*. Thomas Walker, a former New York City police officer, wrote a book entitled *Fort Apache* based upon his experiences as a lieutenant assigned to the forty-first precinct in the South Bronx during 1971 and 1972. This precinct was popularly nicknamed "Fort Apache" because of its violence. Walker published his book in 1976 and over 100,000 copies were sold. Meanwhile, producers David Susskind, Gill Champion, and Martin Richards, in association with Time Life Films, Inc., released a film in 1981 entitled *Fort Apache: The Bronx*. The film, like the book, also depicted police life in the South Bronx precinct.

Walker sued Time Life Films, Susskind, Champion, Richards, and screenwriter Heywood Gould, claiming copyright infringement. The district court denied Walker's claim and he appealed to the Second Circuit. The issue again was "substantial similarity." Walker argued that his book and the film were similar in plot, theme, dialogue, setting, pace, and sequence. Walker had submitted an expert's affidavit in the district court, which highlighted and listed similarities between the two works. Time Life had presented its own expert affidavits by a literary analyst, contrasting the structure, mood, characters, themes, and episodes of the two works.

The appellate court stated that it had both read the book and viewed the film. It then observed, "At the most general level, the movie and the book tell the same story. Both recount the experiences of policemen battling the hostile environment of the 41st precinct." The court then observed that Walker's book stylistically "unfolds as a chronicle of police work" and moves "anecdotally from one event to the other" in "a non-stop recounting of brutal crimes and police action." It ends with Walker's transfer to a different precinct.

Next, the court examined the film in depth, suggesting that it "focuses" on Murphy, a 12-year veteran of the force, and "centers around" Murphy's affair with a drug-addicted nurse. It contrasts the character of Murphy and Walker (much as Superman and Hinkley). Murphy is independent-minded, cynical, divorced, and a patrolman insubordinate to authority. Walker is practical, happily married, a lieutenant who never disobeys an order or questions a superior. In his appeal Walker countered these differences with his own list of likenesses:

> Both the book and the film begin with the murder of a black and a white policeman with a handgun at close range; both depict cockfights, drunks, stripped cars, prostitutes and rats; both feature as central characters third or fourth generation Irish policemen who live in Queens and frequently drink; both show disgruntled, demoralized police officers and unsuccessful foot chases of fleeing criminals.

The Second Circuit downplayed these likenesses as "scenes a faire," or "stock themes," linked to particular situations and the genre of police fiction, or just "scattered analogies." It further characterized the film as "an intensely plotted work with multiple, vivid suspenseful, and interrelated storylines"—cop-killer manhunt, Murphy's love affair, precinct captain's struggles. Walker's book was "diary-like...without significant character or plot development." Possibly the three-dimensional Technicolor world of the film was experienced differently by the judges than the two-dimensional black and white of Walker's book. The court, not surprisingly, concluded its reasoning by upholding the district court's finding of no "substantial similarity" and thus no infringement. The opinion also dismissed the many common incidents of book and film as being based on actual events at the precinct, and thus not protectible expression of an original idea or creation.

One might speculate whether, if positions were reversed in this lawsuit, Walker might have been found liable for copyright infringement. The *Apache* decision continually implies that the cinematic "copy" is far superior to the "original," both dramatically and artistically. Walker later tried to appeal the Second Circuit decision to the U.S. Supreme Court. His petition for review was denied (476 US 1159).

Let us now travel a few thousand miles to view the West Coast version of "substantial similarity." A well-publicized case was *Olson vs. NBC* (855 F2d 1446), or *The A-Team*. Ernest Olson, who wrote a treatment and screenplay** for a television pilot entitled *Cargo*, sued NBC, MCA, Inc., and Stephen Cannell Productions for copyright infringement. Olson claimed that the television series *The A-Team* had copied *Cargo*.

The trial was held in U.S. District Court in California. A jury decided that the evidence showed infringement, and it brought back a verdict in favor of Olson's claim. However, the federal district court judge reversed the jury, declaring that their decision was unreasonable as a matter of law. Olson then appealed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (California). The appellate court dealt with the question of "substantial similarity" of *Cargo* and *A-Team* by applying a two part test: 1. an "extrinsic" test or listing of common factors and, 2. an "intrinsic" test—the response of an "ordinary reasonable person."

*The A-Team*, beloved by many Mr. T fans, is an action adventure series featuring Vietnam vets. The four members of the team are Peck (suave con artist and reluctant member), Baracas (huge man with a Mohawk), Smith (leader and cigar-smoking strategist), and Murdock (pilot). Three of the group are in flight from an unjustified court martial. Their arch enemy is Colonel Lynch, a career military man they know from Vietnam. *Cargo* is also an action adventure series. Its three main characters are also a group of Vietnam vets: Van Druten (smooth intellectual and reluctant member), Brown (huge man resembling ex-football player Rosie Greer), and Tronski (leader and pilot who smokes). They act under the threat of unjustified drug charges from Colonel Kilgore, a militarist who they know from Vietnam.

At trial, Olson's expert dissected the two works and listed similarities such as character, relationship, and plot elements. Olson alleged that the *A-Team* ensemble of characters and series concept overall closely paralleled his *Cargo* team: reluctant Peck is a clone of reluctant Van Druten; Black Baracas is based on Black Brown; A-Team's leader Smith and pilot Murdock are a "split" of Cargo leader and pilot Tronski; evil Colonel Lynch derives from *Cargo*'s evil Colonel Kilgore. Both series are quickly paced, comic. These are loud echoes of familiarity.

The Ninth Circuit disposed of the plot and setting comparisons handily, pointing out that, even if the basic plot premise is alike, there is insufficient similarity of sequence and setting. For example, *Cargo* team fights drug dealers in New York and Columbia; A-Team fights mercenaries in Mexico. It added that any other similarities are just "familiar scenes and themes which are among the very staples of modern American literature and film" (such as gun battles and chases, apparently). Certainly the court had only one episode of *Cargo* to compare with several dozen episodes of *A-Team*, which weighted the analysis. The court acknowledged that there were "loose correspondences" between the ensemble characters of the two series, but it believed that the *Cargo* characters were thinly drawn and differed in significant ways from those of *A-Team*. Only unusually distinctive characters could be protected.

* The defense of parody is also implicit in this case though not discussed at length in the court's opinion and beyond the scope of this article.

** The issue of NBC's access to the screenplay was not disputed for purposes of the appeal.

Thus, "Van Druten is neither Malvolio nor Mickey Mouse; Brown is neither Sir Toby Belch nor Superman. The *Cargo* characters are depicted only by three or four line summaries in the *Cargo* treatment." The decision concluded that there was no "substantial similarity" under the "extrinsic" test, and consequently none under the "intrinsic" test.

Wait a minute. Isn't the "intrinsic" test the response of a reasonable person? Didn't the jury in fact find "substantial similarity" and return a verdict for Olson? Is it so impossible to recognize major commonalities between *Cargo* and *A-Team*? The appellate court admitted that a reasonable jury might have found "substantial similarity" in the "total concept" and "feel" of the two series. Yet it asserted that those very real similarities arise from the use of common ideas and unprotectible "scenes a faire"; there is no "substantial similarity" of protectible creative expression. A footnote to the decision does suggest that one could "conceivably" find substantial similarity based upon the "concatenation of scenes a faire as distinctive as the occurrence in both works of a cigar smoking man firing a machine gun from the back of a truck."

Maybe only great literature and drama deserves protection, along with living legends like Mickey Mouse. Again, one wonders if the court would have decided differently if *A-Team* were suing *Cargo*. Perhaps not. Perhaps plaintiff/appellant Olson erred in hiring a New York City law firm to pursue his appeal in a California federal court. One may always speculate.

I have described several cases that suggest that filmmakers and television- or screenwriters have a lot of room to emulate successful works, particularly if they vary plot elements and modify a characterization or three. Lawyers representing you in this kind of litigation apparently are given quite a bit of ammunition to blast a charge of "substantial similarity" to smithereens. Still, "substantial similarity" seems a slippery eel that might provide a shock when you least expect it.

*Sheldon Siporin is a member of the New York State Bar Association Committee on Motion Pictures and Television and is in private practice as an attorney.*

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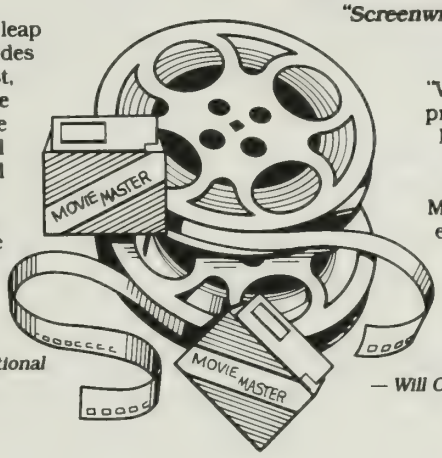
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# Reading New German Cinema

Karen Rosenberg

**New German Cinema: A History**
Thomas Elsaesser, Rutgers University Press, 430 pp., $50 (cloth), $14.95 (paper)

**Case Histories**
Alexander Kluge, translated by Leila Vennewitz, Holmes and Meier, 224 pp., $19.95 (cloth)

**West German Filmmakers on Film: Visions and Voices**
Eric Rentschler, editor, Holmes and Meier, 262 pp., $45 (cloth), $19.50 (paper)

When I first started to explore film culture in West Germany, I was struck by the apparent ease with which many directors moved from writing to film and back again. Perhaps the most famous example is Alexander Kluge, a man of many media. His story *Anita G.*, in the collection *Case Histories*, formed the basis of his first feature, *Yesterday Girl* (*Abschied von gestern*), made in 1965-66. But it's no scenario. The wit in Kluge's metaphors shows that his talent is verbal as well as visual.

Likewise, Eric Rentschler's anthology of manifestos, open letters, articles, and reviews from the early 1960s to the present demonstrates how active West German directors have been in the realm of nonfiction. And it presents a very foreign picture. For example, in the United States, it is considered in dubious taste for directors to respond in print to negative criticism. (Artists are supposed to be above all that, or to complain in private.) In West Germany, the premises of critics are apt to be questioned by directors unconstrained by our taboos. In their writings, West German filmmakers strike poses, wage polemics, and cement alliances—by conscious choice. "In the 1960s and 1970s, we loved the *nouvelle vague* directors," Hartmut Bitomsky, a filmmaker and editor of the now-defunct magazine *Filmkritik*, told me last summer in West Berlin. "But we criticized them for giving up writing after they became successful as filmmakers. It was very important for us to continue writing while filming, and vice versa."

To a certain extent, all this writing bespeaks a profound dissatisfaction with West German film culture among directors. In the early 1960s, that dissatisfaction centered around the lack of production and distribution opportunities for German directors. With a series of state-legislated funding measures—well-chronicled in Thomas Elsaesser's new book—many German filmmakers finally got a chance to make features and air them on late-night television.

But, according to Elsaesser, state subsidies also created a double bind for West German directors. They had to prove their independence so viewers wouldn't regard their creations as "official art." Yet they couldn't give the hand that was feeding them too sharp a bite. Elsaesser argues that filmmakers, by maintaining that cinema is an autonomous art form, avoided the uncomfortable topic of patronage and the obligations and restraints that it engenders. For him, the Neo-Romantic image of the filmmaker engaged in compulsive self-expression was primarily a strategy designed to win the loyalty of viewers who were also obsessed with defining their identity.

Elsaesser's theory explains the rather annoying penchant of some well-known West German directors for posing as lofty geniuses. Much film criticism has merely echoed such claims. Elsaesser is to be congratulated for demystifying them. While I would never ignore the self-serving urge for fame and fortune, I wouldn't exaggerate it either. The typical German director still feels marginal to Hollywood, since U.S. productions dominate the German film market. And, since the industry offers up a notoriously limited number of terms for debate, the popularity of Hollywood movies has profound political repercussions, outside the U.S. as well as within. So German filmmakers, in fighting for themselves, have also been waging a battle for an alternative political culture.

There was, and is, a desire on the part of many German filmmakers to create a lively, oppositional public sphere—an arena where ideas, beliefs, and images interact. This goal was articulated in *The Public Sphere and Experience* (1972), an influential book by Kluge and sociologist Oskar Negt, which will be published in an English translation by the University of Minnesota Press next year. In the meantime, the fall 1988 issue of the journal *October* (No. 46) provides a brief overview of Kluge's theory, as well as excerpts from his and Negt's book and an excellent bibliography.

In light of Kluge's theory, the production of provocative books and essays by West German filmmakers should be seen, at least in part, as attempts to dislodge the public from the passive consumption mode. The goal of many directors/polemicists was not just cash in the box office but critical minds in the theater. If, in practice, filmmakers often floundered when trying to create movies that would engage the spectator in a kind of dialogue, that's not surprising. Elsaesser faults many directors for overexplicitness, a condescending attitude to their characters or an ingratiating style. But one might also note the difficulty of building a cinema of ideas in post-fascist Germany. "We had no fathers, only grandfathers," Werner Herzog once said. That overstatement meant that the post-war generation felt it could not use much of their parents' wisdom, for it had been tainted by Nazi values.

"I do not believe that there is anywhere else where people have suffered such a loss of confidence in images of their own, their own stories and myths, as we have," wrote Wim Wenders in another hyperbolic statement, which is included in Rentschler's book. Some directors, including Wenders, found a surrogate father in the United States—one they could rebel against. And in Hollywood movies they also discovered the mark of German émigré filmmakers, a legacy they could draw upon.

If the manifestos of post-war German directors are reminiscent of the polemics of artists of the teens and twenties, that is no coincidence. There was a conscious attempt to reclaim a critical tradition in arts and letters that had been buried (sometimes literally) by the fascists. That meant going back to Rosa Luxemburg, Bertolt Brecht, and Kurt Tucholsky, as Elsaesser notes. Bitomsky and others add the Marxist cultural theorists Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno to that list. "The way to the cinema was paved with books," German director Helma Sanders-Brahms said, with unmistakable distaste,



***Der Rosenkönig* (*The Rose King*), by Werner Schroeter.**

Courtesy Goethe Institute

in her article "'New German Cinema, jeune cinéma allemand, Good Night': A Day in Oberhausen, 1982," translated by Rentschler.

The image of a torch being passed from grandparents to grandchildren appeared at various points in post-war German film history. Werner Herzog walked, mind you, from Munich to Paris with the cans of his film *Kaspar Hauser* in his knapsack to visit the aged Lotte Eisner. Elsaesser is right on target when he stresses the deliberate symbolism of this act.

That *the* historian of Expressionist cinema, émigré Jew and woman, friend of F.W. Murnau and Fritz Lang, personal assistant to Henri Langlois (founding father of the Cinemathèque and patron saint of the French *nouvelle vague*) should—on what might easily have been her deathbed—give a young German film-maker her blessing, by assuring him that his work was once more "legitimate German culture," could itself be read as a founding myth of origins and identity.

Similarly, it is often said that Adorno, who also spent the war in emigration, got Kluge into filmmaking by introducing him to Fritz Lang. Kluge has explained that Lang, who was being pushed around by his producer, could not really help or inspire him. Adorno was skeptical about Kluge's talent as a filmmaker and a fiction writer and about the potential of movies to avoid the homogenization of ideas. But the invocation of the names Lang and Adorno certainly helped create an aura around the emerging director. A myth of origins, after all, does not depend on mere facts.

As Elsaesser points out, the claim of filmmakers to be the inheritors of the best in German culture had another effect: It justified state expenditure on film. Politicians and voters could feel that their money was going to a worthy goal. German cinema, argues Elsaesser, implicitly presented the case that West rather than East Germany is the legitimate heir to the critical tradition in German thought. And film, which is easy to transport (compared to theater or fine art) and which requires relatively little translation, could argue this case to the world. I might add that film could prove that West Germany had overcome its Nazi past. A people that had once exterminated homosexuals has not only funded gay filmmakers Rosa von Praunheim and Werner Schroeter but toured their works abroad under the auspices of the Goethe Institute (a retrospective of the work of Ulrike Ottinger is being planned by the Goethe Institutes of the U.S. and Canada for 1990). I can't imagine the United States Information Agency doing the same for U.S. filmmakers who attack homophobia or present other-than-mainstream images of same-sex relationships.

One thesis of Elsaesser's *New German Cinema* is that post-war German filmmakers were more successful in winning government support than in gaining large numbers of viewers at home. Only certain "target" audiences were won: Wenders appealed to melancholy, alienated men, rather like his heroes; films by feminists attracted women; the avant-garde, generally not funded by television and the state, spoke to other avant-garde artists; leftist filmmakers talked to the generation of 1968, etc. (An advantage of Elsaesser's book over others on New German Cinema is that it discusses feminist, documentary, and experimental film, not just the most famous names.) To Elsaesser, this splintered film scene suggests that filmmakers have failed in their mission. To me, it says that the public has yet to be educated about what a participatory public sphere would look, feel, and sound like. I'd be willing to bet that ordinary citizens have not even been informed that dialogue with a film is possible. All the blame should not fall on filmmakers, especially those who have written about their goals, for that state of affairs. Rather, it says something about the way schools teach—how they explain the concepts of art and democracy. And this is not a German problem alone, of course.

With the post-1968 backlash, the radical political concept of a participatory, oppositional public sphere has met a lot of resistance, including from kids who'd rather try for entry into the elite than expend their energy on risky attempts at social change. In Germany, the under-30 generation has turned away from many directors of the New German Cinema. I heard a lot of praise for Steven Spielberg from young Germans last summer, and I saw long lines for *Dirty Dancing*. But from that experience I'm not willing to conclude with Elsaesser that New German Cinema's political program has collapsed and that it offers "no aesthetic concept, other than a homemade kit of ideas borrowed from *Cahiers du Cinéma* cinephilia of over 30 years ago or from the other arts." This sounds like the "stuck in the sixties" epithet North Americans use to push each other to the right. I don't think that Kluge's dictum that "spectators must all become collaborators," for example, should be dismissed so glibly.

Rather than losing currency, the idea that art is an open form which demands the participation of the viewer/reader in creating meaning is gaining ground. Mikhail Bakhtin, as well as Brecht and Benjamin, made that point long ago, and it is finally catching on among academics and journalists in film, art, and literary circles. Whether this theory is one more fashion, to be replaced soon by another, remains to be seen. How long it will take for the concept to get into common parlance is yet another question. But the role of the New German Cinema in keeping the idea alive should not be underestimated.

*Karen Rosenberg is a writer whose work has appeared in* Sight and Sound, *the* Nation, *the* Boston Globe, In These Times, *and elsewhere. Her latest article on German film, "In the Eye of the Beholder: Poetic Documentaries about Technology," appeared in the February/March issue of* Technology Review.

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**Photographers at the funeral of Gudrun Enslin, a member of the so-called Baader-Meinhof gang, in *Deutschland im Herbst* (*Germany in Autumn*, 1977-78), a collective film on which Alexander Kluge, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Edgar Reitz, Volker Schlöndorff, and other directors identified with New German Cinema collaborated.**

Courtesy filmmakers

# "We Are Demolition Artists" An Interview with Alexander Kluge



**From the independent television series *Ten to Eleven*.**
Courtesy filmmaker

Yvonne Rainer and Ernest Larsen

West German filmmaker Alexander Kluge made his second visit to the United States last October. In New York City to speak at Anthology Film Archives, first whistlestop of an extensive tour of his retrospective sponsored by the Goethe Institute, he was taking a short break from his current project as producer of a weekly TV show.

It may be a measure of the still largely anti-intellectual bias of critics, audiences, and distributors in the U.S. that Kluge's work is so poorly known here. Despite a career spanning 25 years in which he's produced something like 40 films (some of them film festival prize-winnners), he still gets the "Alexander who?" treatment. Every other major West German director of his generation would get the Uptown retrospective razzmatazz.

Perhaps not unconnected to this oddity is the fact that Kluge is the least conventionally narrative and the most consciously political filmmaker of that generation. Considered in this light, we could also put this incomprehension down to our apparent inability to absorb any cultural product lacking generic packaging. It's not that a Kluge film doesn't have a story to hang onto for dear life—it often has six or eight stories, along with obliquely specific or meditative narration, and tinted silent movie footage, and faked documentary footage, opera (lots of opera), and "real" documentary footage, and interviews, and so on. It might be that Kluge's refusal to supply the connections among these disparate elements unsettles all too thoroughly our preconceptions of what a film is.

This was, in fact, one of the things we wished to talk to him about. He spent several hours with us, speaking excellent English, and would seldom settle for a simple fact or description when a good metaphor would be much more interesting—would unite apparently disparate realms of discourse. His effortless heterogeneity of reference might be related to the heterogeneity of his everyday existence. He is a trained lawyer and, as such, perhaps the principal person responsible for the success of the organized struggle for independent filmmaking in Germany. A former student of Adorno, he is a teacher and film researcher. He is a prize-winning author of fiction and a neo-Marxist theoretician. He is the father of two children. We failed to ask him the hard questions about childcare.

□ □ □

**Yvonne Rainer:** How do you finance and distribute your films?

**Alexander Kluge:** That is a complicated question. For 25 years we have been developing the tradition of New German Cinema, which is not possible any more. When the [Helmut] Kohl government took power in 1982, it killed the possibilities for independent film on the market. Market influences, especially in film theaters, made for what could be called a kids' picture market, which made it impossible to recover money invested in serious






**Both stills from the independent television series *Ten to Eleven*.**

Courtesy filmmaker.

films. Therefore serious filmmaking is not independent anymore but highly subsidized by public funds. As a consequence, the majority of independent filmmakers have tried to find other ways to make cinema. Channel Four in Great Britain serves as an example of coexistence between television and independent filmmaking. We are now attempting to establish an independent television system in Germany, and return to the cinema later.

**Ernest Larsen:** You haven't been producing films for some time, then?

**AK:** For the last three years I have produced only for television. But we are doing there what we wanted to do in cinema. We have started over again with Lumière and Méliès and make pre-Hollywood films—films before 1907. We combine the documentary style of Lumière and the fictional style of Méliès, the Viennese school of modern music and all the richness of film history to reconstruct film history once more. It's our experience that in film you have flourishing independent movements for two or three years. And then commercial influence comes in and rationalizes everything, making it more effective. Then it dies. Therefore, film never has enough time for incubation. But we can repeat and reconstruct everything, as Walter Benjamin explains, once more. Although you can't reconstruct exactly what happened in film history, you can find relatives or cousins or ancestors of what existed.

**EL:** What's to protect those means of production from being recuperated all over again by commercialization?

**AK:** It will be. But you can defend against that for quite some time. For instance, I and some of my friends are both filmmakers and lawyers. And we know our weapons, we are armed people.

**EL:** Do your television films reach wide audiences?

**AK:** They have very good ratings.

**YR:** After showing on TV, do they reach the theaters?

**AK:** I hope so. For the moment it's difficult because we don't have much money. Since half the work is produced on video rather than film, we have to wait for the advent of a high-definition image.

**YR:** When you say "we," who do you mean?

**AK:** We have organized ourselves. We have organized all opera houses and theaters in Germany, book publishers and independent filmmakers. In other words, the traditional media—not newspapers or broadcast artists—the books, cinemas, theaters, and the circus. They belong together. And on television they look very different. This is understandable because originally they had nothing to do with television.

We also have a partner, the news magazine *Der Spiegel*. They take half our time. Together, we have a common license with two big private satellite consortia: SAT-1 and RTL. We would not have gotten licenses if *Der Spiegel* had not cooperated with us. Although we'd like to make news programs, we can't, so we cooperate with them.

**EL:** How long has this program been on?

**AK:** We've worked for three years. We started with a quarter of an hour, and now we have two hours every week.

**YR:** Do you make a segment, and another director makes a segment?

**AK:** Exactly.

**YR:** Are these segments related?

**AK:** We believe very much in cooperation *and* autonomy. For instance, Fassbinder, Schlöndorff, Reitz, I, and others made the film *Germany in Autumn* together. There was no super-director. No one was totally responsible. But each of us was responsible for his 20 minutes.

**YR:** Is your TV show organized like *Deep Dish TV* or public access in the U.S.?

**AK:** Not exactly, since these are private systems, private property. We can exclude anybody we don't want. And it's completely professional.

**EL:** As far as I know, this wouldn't be possible in this country.

**AK:** But it's the same concept as New German Cinema, you see. It's a lot of political work. We have about 60 lawyers. Even while I'm here I have to telephone Germany constantly because the CDU [Christian Democratic Union] attacks our licenses because of *Der Spiegel*'s programs. They will accept art, but not political news programs.

**YR:** Are the two parts separate—what *Der Spiegel* does and what you do?

**AK:** On Sunday evenings there is *Der Spiegel*'s program, and on Monday evenings we have our program entitled *Ten to Eleven*. On the other program *Der Spiegel*'s part and the art magazine part are integrated.

**YR:** Do you ever collaborate with them?

**AK:** Of course. For instance, we made the film *Der Kandidat* [*The Candidate*, 1980] when [Franz Joseph] Strauss, the prime minister of Bavaria, tried to become chancellor of Germany. Later, we and *Der Spiegel* made a film about how he died and was buried. He was buried like the King of Bavaria. It was the most elaborate burial Germany has seen since the big




**Opening credits for the independent television series *Ten to Eleven*, broadcast weekly via the West German satellite consortia SAT-1 and RTL.**

Courtesy filmmaker

Nazi state burials. Our part doesn't look like television or television news. It looks like experimental film, but a very calm form of it.

**YR:** How many filmmakers are involved in these projects?

**AK:** Quite a lot. Werner Herzog, Volker Schlöndorff, and a lot of not so famous filmmakers, who are the majority.

**YR:** Are there any women?

**AK:** Helka Sander, Margarethe von Trotta...about half of the programs are made by women. One of the future programs will be about Doris Dorrie. We don't sign our names to the programs. After a while you might notice Christa Wolf or Schlöndorff on screen. Or you might recognize a filmmaker's style. But we don't put names on the programs, so we don't have a hierarchy. We believe in the point where contradictions come alive, where two things are separated, the seamline. There you get 50 percent chaos and 50 percent good structure. You need not organize there. This is where invention happens.

**YR:** Do women have their own programs?

**AK:** Yes. Gertrud Koch, for instance is one of our producers, working with Heide Schlüpmann and others—especially in Frankfurt.

**EL:** Do you have a master editor for this TV program, someone who edits the programs every week?

**AK:** Yes. We have one editor from New York—Marcel Peragine—and a lot of computer editors. In Arriflex's factory in Munich there is a film laboratory, and one floor above is our one-inch video studio. We take the negative from downstairs and take it upstairs and so on.

**YR:** Are the programs mixtures of documentary and fiction?

**AK:** Yes. We have two programs. One is a variety show. Before 1907 you always had a variety show made up of short pieces, primitive diversity—abbreviated operas, compressed operas, compressed novels. And all these types, we try to reconstruct, but by means of modern music. For instance, Luigi Nono is a modern composer. He made 40 two-minute operas for us—*Madame Butterfly*, two minutes. *L'Africaine*, two minutes. He makes the music, and we make the pictures for this music. So it's a television opera. It looks tiny, and tiny means short. This is one type. The other type of program we make is extremely long. For instance, Edgar Reitz made the 18-hour-long *Heimat*. Long documentaries are another idea. We've made only two of these: *Two Hundred Years of French Revolution* and one about the student protest movement of '68. Right now that one is nine hours long. This longer form is shown late at night, from 10 o'clock in the evening to four o'clock in the morning.

We love the second type. Ten years from now it may be be possible to have an epic form without time limitation. But it depends on balance, whether narration and music can help you bear so much documentary stuff. The problem is that human beings are not interested in reality, or in truth, by itself.

**EL:** I was buying a ticket for Ophuls' *Hotel Terminus*, and someone came up and asked the ticket-taker, "Is this a documentary or is it a movie?"

**AK:** One can never tell, and it's not necessary to separate them. It's an administrative approach to say, "This is documentary, and this is fiction." In reality there are no different departments. I have eyes, and I have wishes. One can recognize reality, and the other wants to have utopia. Together both make something real. For me it's a subjective point. It's also objective. That's our credo.

**YR:** Aside from the length of these works, do you work differently thinking about the TV set? Do you conceive your shots differently than when working with film?

**AK:** No. We try to incorporate the experiences and methods of film history into television. For example, we tried to remove the zoom lens of an electronic camera and use fixed optics.

**YR:** Which has always been more of a European film tradition.

**AK:** Yes, because the zoom compromises, while with fixed optics each lens has its own history. Some have a history of 500 years, a tradition derived from astronomy and film. These lenses have character.

**YR:** The telescope has no zoom?

**AK:** Exactly. And I'm very impressed with such instruments, but we use these optics and get a very different picture. They can produce depth. Normal television in Germany is like wallpaper—only foreground—and we are interested in perspective, in making it a miniature of the theater.

**YR:** But that can be reactionary in a certain way.

**AK:** I know. In art you can dissolve disciplines once you have arrived at modernity. But in television, you haven't yet arrived at modernity.

**YR:** You mean it's primitive?

**AK:** It's a primitive way of distributing things. It's a means of administration.

**YR:** Do you think you're bringing television up to modernity?

**AK:** Yes. It should not talk about operas. It should not try to bring operas out of the opera house to a place where operas cannot live. Television should show opera in perspective. For instance, nineteenth-century opera looks quite different from the perspective of good modern composers. Nobody could stand 90 minutes of it. For three minutes no one even notices how complicated it is. It's simply beautiful.

**EL:** Is it the perspective of the audience you're thinking of?

**AK:** In the evening people are tired, so they want to have three minutes of Verdi, and three minutes of noise, and Kant for another three minutes. And then want to have some information, and so on. It's the same as Babylon—like the other television—but it is a reconstructed Babylon.

**EL:** How is the effect of your Babylon different for audiences?

**AK:** The effect is accepted. They even accept long documentaries.

**EL:** Does it change them?



**Alexandra Kluge, the filmmaker's sister, plays the main character in *Abschied von gestern* (*Yesterday Girl*, 1965-66), based on the filmmaker's story *Anita G.***

Courtesy filmmaker

**AK:** Television, like a window, can change you.

**EL:** Does it change their consciousness?

**AK:** Yes. But it's different. Here, in Greenwich Village, I look through the window and can become calm. You could sit me down here and I would write stories. But not everywhere could I do so. That makes a difference.

**YR:** Are you talking about providing a field for contemplation but not directing people's consciousness?

**AK:** Consciousness has several functions or capacities. One is to represent the world. If you look at a watch, it represents time. Not really, but it pretends to represent time. And if I look through the window—a television window is something like a window, an artificial window—then it represents what's going on in the world. In former times people looked onto the marketplace. In Frankfurt, Goethe's mother looked out onto the marketplace, and knew what was going on. If somebody didn't appear for a long time, he was dead. This was the way over the years she shaped a picture of everyday life. Today, for the majority, this experience has been replaced by television. One has to stick to the ideas and forms of experience of the majority, even if the majority is in error.

**EL:** Well, not entirely. The majority doesn't stick entirely to the same ideas. Or you would just let them watch the same TV they're already watching.

**AK:** Well, it's not the same TV if you represent something of real life, of experience. Television is not interested at all in experience, it's interested in its program. And we avoid the notion of the program; we destroy it. That's what we want to do first.

**YR:** What do you mean by that?

**AK:** Well, authentic experience is not a program. Look, you have the movement of your hands. You have a certain intensity. This is authentic; it's not a program. That's yourself. I think some aspects of program are necessary, you need it like pepper and salt.

**EL:** It's an organization of experience. It's always necessary.

**YR:** But how is it possible to avoid that?

**AK:** We are demolition artists. If you can construct something you can demolish it, and you can reconstruct it and demolish it again.

**YR:** You have said that cinema has more to do with Punch and Judy than with serious art, implying that as serious artists we are, and I quote you, "only too inclined to become too easily esoteric." How do you feel about this notion of the esoteric now?

**AK:** Concerning experience, everything I do as a person will become esoteric very soon, of course.

**YR:** Why?

**AK:** I'm Robinson Crusoe. If I am an artist, I am alone, and individually I can work only this way. I'm esoteric like Adorno is, like every artist is. But I would like to have camouflage, mimicry. I think it's important not to show one is an artist nowadays, because it is a very dangerous status.

**YR:** Why do you say that?

**AK:** Because in our country art is hated to some extent. Modernism they hate. If you had a plebiscite, they would vote against art, against modernity. One reason is that art always deals with destruction, it doesn't accept experience and habits as they are. Art changes something. It takes marble away. It does not add marble. And this is not the way experiences are shaped, or how people think experiences are shaped. In the book I wrote with Oskar Negt, *Public Life and Experience*, I stick very much to the concept of experience. Human experience is extremely interesting and very artistic. Everybody, every human being, is making art without knowing it, they make very modern art. In the mind, the senses, in the hands, and everywhere.

I believe in this, but it is not conscious. If you make it conscious, people don't feel secure, don't feel happy. They have never been encouraged to be autonomous concerning their own art production or the production of their experiences. They are discouraged. But, as an artist, you get this cognitive dissonance, because we have the chance, lifelong, to prepare artistic business, and know it and have time for it, every day. I don't make my art in the evening when I'm tired. I make it when I'm not tired. We have some privileges.

**EL:** So how do you curb this privilege in order to make what you do a communicative act. In other words, prevent it from becoming so esoteric that any audience will have trouble, become suspicious?

**AK:** It's a balance problem.

**EL:** Is it a tactical question?

**AK:** It's not tactical; it's a question of character. It's a political question, and it's a question of balance. Balance is not only technique. Take the artist as someone balancing at the top of a circus tent—perplexed. People can't answer to Auschwitz or other matters of worldly experience through artistic development, as everybody might think. They can't be more artistic than artists are, they can only balance. You cannot do more than balance. If you overbalance, you fall. Balance is something you can't increase, and as an artist, you can't provide an answer to the cruel experiences that occupy the minds of the public. Using a Marxist analysis of the relations of production, you have, on one hand, the spectator who can't balance on the high wire and, on the other hand, artists who can. The audience at the circus admires these artists, but also hopes that someone will fall and they have something to talk about at home. This would be thrilling. For this cruel part of the audience—which has little to do with experience and is not friendly to experience—it's a Roman circus.

**EL:** But some of that cruelty arises from their disappointed expectation for their own lives.

**AK:** Right. On the other hand they are demoralized because they also want to dominate. As children they thought they could do anything, and now they are astonished that they don't and can't do some things. This is one of the problems of art. I will always stick to art and love art, but I need some excuse. I have to work a little bit, like I pay taxes. Not to the state but to the people, I have to give something which makes a difference.



**Hannelore Hoger as a young circus performer in *Die Artisten in der Kirkuskuppel: ratlos (Artists under the Big Top: Perplexed*, 1967).**

Photo Constantin/Connex

**EL:** Something that brings you closer to the ground.

**AK:** I would be a clown if I was on the ground at the circus. And this means a show. It would be rather primitive in appearance.

**YR:** Are you talking about making concessions in relation to mass culture?

**AK:** It's not a concession, really. If I make a Punch and Judy show, it's no longer quite the same as a Punch and Judy show. The laboratory in which we work contains 2,000 years of painting and perhaps 600 years of music. We have very good friends in the form of the dead artists who have already done something. It's not only the famous artists, but also those who make Punch and Judy shows—the early movie-makers like Porter, Edison, and so on. We should study them, and reconstruct something of their work. That's not reactionary, because it changes its substance if you bring it authentically into the nineties. Then it's something quite different from 1914.

**EL:** Some of the strategies in your films—disjunctive narrative, combining fiction and documentary, voiceovers, using old films, using characters who don't really seem to be characters, who take up different lives—do you see these strategies as intervening in what you described as the spectator's tendency to produce his or her own meaning? Do you see these techniques as making alternative readings of political events or political problems possible?

**AK:** They are not really techniques, it's more than that. It's an authentic way of making experiences. Our senses do it without it being necessary for us to know how to do it. Only after our senses have done something, do we change these results by interpretation. Take, for instance, the example of [West German] Chancellor [Helmut] Schmidt's visit to Washington. It was a non-event. It didn't exist, although it pretended to exist. Subsequently, the press people made it into an event with their comments and writing. All they did was describe some slight differences between the President [Carter] and the Chancellor, who didn't really speak to each other. They made a formal act, without any meaning, and hated each other deeply. This non-event was made into an event. My work is to destroy it again. Like Socrates would say, "I don't know anything." I know—I stick to—what I don't know.

**EL:** Do you take it apart for a viewer, deconstruct it?

**AK:** Yes, a separate interpretation.

**EL:** All right. Here I am watching your film of this event, this non-event.

**AK:** You would be disturbed after a while.

**EL:** And I would start to attach my own significance to your film of this non-event. Am I licensed to make any interpretation I want? Do I look at this event as a political subject, or simply as a viewer? Is any interpretation possible?

**AK:** No. You can either be disoriented, or you can overtake the concept I have.

**EL:** Let's say I'm disoriented; that happens to lots of people sometimes. People say, "What is this? I can't make a connection here."

**AK:** This is a price I have to pay. You can't have both interpretation and noninterpretation. At first you won't understand either the interpretation or the evidence of your senses. Consequently, it is a world that is extremely unknown. We have a completely disoriented way of perceiving; we have learned something wrong.

**EL:** Your film is teaching us the wrong thing?

**AK:** Yes, and that is the subject of the movie. We learned something wrong, and now we can't just relearn. It's very difficult. If you address the issue of modernity, it's very necessary to include everything from the nineteenth century, the eighteenth century, and the twentieth century—to put everything on the table, to bring it all into the discussion and test it. For instance, everything done by the Bauhaus group we have to test. We should not say we are the party of modernism, because this modernism was defeated in 1933 and has been, to some extent, useless and has now been defeated by postmodernism. Therefore, we have to reconstruct it, but with differences.

**YR:** But postmodernism does not do this. Can you talk about this?

**AK:** It's not analytic at all.

**EL:** It refuses to interpret.

**AK:** Yes, and I think it's necessary to stick to analysis and synthesis and to all these rich capacities human societies have and art has. Nothing in art can be forgotten. We don't believe in new ideas. New ideas are Catalinarian. It's Roman—Cicero shouting at Cataline—always having new ideas. This principle of denying reality—to be anti-traditionalist in a Catalinarian way—we recognize very quickly. It's something very easy to analyze and recognize. We saw that in the student movement of '68.

**YR:** I'm interested in what you would have shown of Schmidt and Carter in Washington if you had filmed them.

**AK:** I would have made time measurements, like Mr. [Frederick Winslow] Taylor, the time-motion analyst, did. From eight o'clock in the morning, when Schmidt gets up, what does he do? Has he any time to think? Who thinks for him? Who writes his speeches? How long does it take him to drink his morning coffee?

**YR:** You would take him away from the center to show all these peripheral details of daily life?

**AK:** Yes. He pretends to be doing something else.

**EL:** To return to the point about disorientation and demolition. As an artist, you have to take the risk of disorienting some spectators because they have to unlearn what they already know.

**AK:** My mother taught me to be extremely polite, and I hate artists who provoke. I think it's damaging. I don't like it when spectators are disappointed. I like to think of myself as someone who persuades people, makes things easier, like adding music or a little narration to something that's disturbing. The audience then has something to do, and they can tolerate disorientation a little better.



**A Frankfurt apartment being demolished in *In Gefahr und grösster Not bringt der Mittelweg den Tod (In Danger and Dire Distress the Middle of the Road Leads to Death*, 1974, directed with Edgar Reitz).**

Courtesy filmmaker

**EL:** The film I think of when you say that is *Strong Man Ferdinand*, and that has a very clear storyline, a very clear narrative, with much less use of documentary as an element.

**AK:** If you compare that with the original written story, you'd notice that half of the experience of *Strong Man Ferdinand* is lacking in the film. The price of narrative film is very high. You lose half of the experience. With everyone busy looking at the plot, you can hold the interest of the audience. On the other hand, this is not like experience. It's simplified to an extent, and everyone can say, "I'm not really like this man."

**EL:** Do you want to implicate the spectator?

**AK:** You have to implicate, and you have to show that everybody in the audience had better be disoriented, because a particle of Strong Man Ferdinand is in everybody.

**EL:** It's inevitable, then, that narrative excludes enormous aspects of experience. It's not possible to narrate huge blocks of real life. Therefore, it seems that since *Strong Man Ferdinand* you've gotten further and further away from narrative.

**YR:** It seems a very singular film in your production history.

**AK:** I would love to make a narrative film. I have nothing against narration, but not at the expense of experience. I don't want to exclude anything. That's both a political stand and an artistic stand.

**YR**: Are you're saying that structurally narrative must exclude?

**AK:** Yes, but, the contrary of a narrative film is to make distinctions. For instance cold—what does cold means? What does hot mean? What does witch mean—the witches in *Macbeth*, the witches in medieval times, the witch nowadays, the witch that is part of all of us? "My mother is a witch"—what does that mean? There are differences. There isn't one witch. There should be distinctions. I think there should be a public interest in distinctions, as much as possible. If you notice when people are calm and chatting together, they don't speak narratively. They explain slight differences. One word leads into the next. There's always a little bit you can add to an experience that already exists. And people come to share common experiences by making comparisons and distinctions.

**YR:** I would like to cover some of the issues that have to do with feminism and your work. Why are so many of your protagonists female, when in some cases they don't have to be, as in *Artists under the Big Top*? Leni Peikert could have been male or female, right?

**AK:** No. I don't think that male beings have their own experience, or too much of it. But that's a very complicated question. It's more a belief than knowledge. I notice that my sister, for instance, or my mother, has more experience than I have.

**EL:** What kind of experience?

**AK:** Chatting.

**EL:** Relational experience?

**AK:** Yes, all kinds of knowledge. If I ask them about stars, they will know more than I do, although I have studied astronomy. It's more belief than knowledge, I trust them.

**YR:** It's not knowledge, if they haven't studied astronomy.

**AK:** They know more.

**YR:** Aren't you idealizing, talking about intuition?

**AK:** For instance, my five-year-old daughter, I'm convinced, sees an aura around us. And if somebody is very tired or becomes ill, she sees this as their outer body shrinking.

**YR:** How does she express this?

**AK:** She avoids these people. She reacts in a way that gives the impression that she knows a little bit more of the future, in the next days at least.

**YR:** Do you have a son?

**AK:** Yes.

**YR:** Does he know such things?

**AK:** No. But I'm not sure that in childhood the difference is so great. Concerning knowledge, I know that all male beings have to bring their childish character to explosion. They take part in the tiger games of masculine society; they have to negate, to abjure their childlike relation to their mother. In Europe young boys don't weep. It's education, but transmitted very early.

**YR:** In choosing a female to play the main character in *Artists under the Big Top*, though, this is implicit. We don't see that the way she perceives the world is different. How do you represent that?

**AK:** We're on thin ice. The film is criticized by the films which never were made, not by films themselves or film critics. The history which is made—and it's made by male beings—can't be reformed or revolutionized by the same male beings in their male organizations that produced it. You can look at it from the point of view that was deliberately excluded by the society. This might be the proletariat. You can find lots of particles, always a rich number of particles on the periphery or in exile, in the diaspora where somebody is included/excluded. And this is the fate of female experience—that it is excluded verbally, from verbal representation, fragmented. And therefore the fragments are more rich. It's one step to a prismatic, a more polyphonic standpoint.



**Chief security guard and assassin Ferdinand Rieche, played by Heinz Schubert (left), on the lookout in *Der Starke Ferdinand* (*Strong Man Ferdinand*, 1975-76).**

Photo Constantin

**EL:** A plurality of voices?

**AK:** An autonomy of all materials. It's not that there is technique on one hand and material on the other, but material itself has its autonomous forms.

**YR:** There's another point of contention by feminists—that so frequently you have a female protagonist who is in an incomplete state, who fails in what she attempts to do, who is in a state of chaos, who is ineffectual.

**AK:** Don't pretend that I could transfer a real female being onto the screen. Therefore, that's not really correct. I show that this is only a pretension.

**YR:** Yet in contrast to this provisional female you have a male narration—your voice explaining and commenting—which can be seen as more coherent, whole.

**AK:** I know that, but it's a very private voice, it's not official. Sometimes I have speakers in the short films who sound official. I never imitate a female voice. When I'm doing the commentary in my private voice, this is myself, the son of my mother if you want, with my private opinions. Everybody can tell that it's not a woman.

**EL:** Even if it is your voice—and I agree when you say the narration sounds like it comes from a real person—but you're still the director with a capital D, and this is your vision. This voice still assumes authority.

**AK:** Notice that I introduce the commentary by making useless remarks merely to introduce the voice. For instance, "It's raining," and you can already see that it's raining. Or, "She sits down." These words are not necessary, they are only used to get acquainted. For the most part the actress does the contrary. In the case of *In Danger and Dire Distress the Middle of the Road Leads to Death* there is a voiceover commentary, not by me, but two women. In *Die Patriotin* I play a dead knee—always from the perspective of the dead knee. But the dead knee doesn't exist. I had to assume a voice that was not the voice of one of the actors, because the actress doesn't need this knee; she has one. In *Power of Emotion* it's similar because the perspective of the feelings is collective. Feelings are not administered by gender. Do you accept that? Some people might say this amounts to a colonization of my actress. I understand this argument but I don't have actors, they don't behave as actors. My sister is not my actress, she is my sister. She's a doctor of medicine, she doesn't know acting. So I'm very cautious about that.

**YR:** Are you talking about questionable professionalism as a mediating factor? Miriam Hansen has talked about the secondary identification that takes place in your films, rather than the primary identification that occurs in mainstream cinema.

**AK:** Neither the protagonist nor myself is the center of the film, and I think these can be counterparts. If you were to attend a shoot, you would notice that I don't direct the performers very much. I observe them much more than I direct them. I'm not a lion tamer, not at all.

**YR:** Do you think it's possible for a dominant class or sex or gender to speak for the oppressed?

**AK:** No. Therefore, I don't believe I should shape characters. If I had the opportunity and money to make effective films in the conventional way, I could do that, and for five minutes I might use such conventions in an ironic way. It's the same as Schoenberg making melodies if he was forced to. But he doesn't think that's an authentic expression. Now I try not to speak—neither for myself nor for someone else. But there are checks and balances of meanings. This is a prismatic effect. Here you have one picture, here you have the other one. Neither one has anything to do with the other. And the cutting, which is visible, holds the meaning, the contrast. If I succeed in making a good scene in a film, it consists of unseen pictures.

**YR:** Spoken, described pictures?

**AK:** Empty spaces, pictures only the spectator sees. They are not in one picture and not in the other one. Schoenberg invented the invisible picture. In *Moses and Aaron*, there is one moment when Israel had a moment of silence for the Egyptians who died—complete silence. In good performances there is complete darkness in the opera house. This is a moment where there is nothing. It's an invisible picture. You should not make picture of everything.

**EL:** What is that moment for? For the audience to contemplate?

**AK:** It's nothing. Every human being is capable—because cinema is older than cinema—of making something from nearly nothing. But you need some counterpoints. If you have two counterpoints, you make a third thing that is yours. The autonomous impression of a spectator is never synonymous with what she or he sees. The spectator can make either anarchy or the structure I try to invent.

**EL:** What political meaning do you ascribe to that?

**AK:** Freedom, if you want. This is exactly what Karl Marx meant by "rich social relations." This is what we carry within us without knowing it.

**EL:** To what extent does this become reality? Or is it only a mental state?

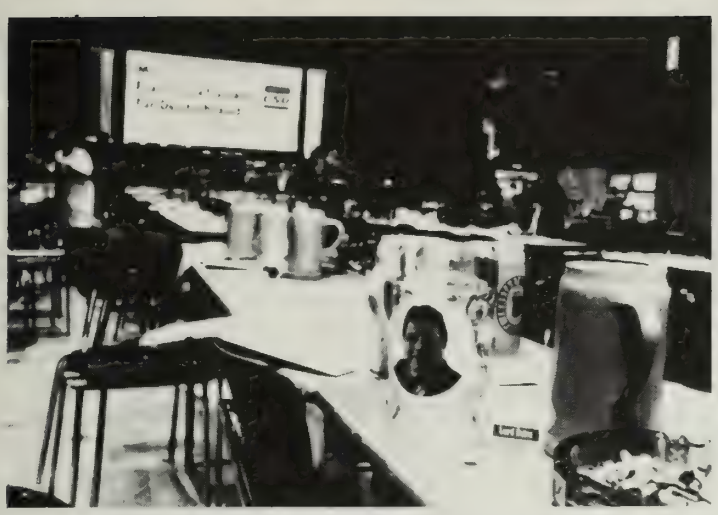
**AK:** Not at all. It is everywhere. You bury it in your body. I don't know exactly where it is. Therefore the knee, because it's something that doesn't exist. It's a function, but you can't say it's only a function. If you've lost it, you notice it's more than that. But it's not a body, it's a link. It's a possibility.

**EL:** But if it is freedom or liberation, why doesn't it accumulate?

**YR:** It seems to be always fading away.

**AK:** You can't accumulate freedom itself or liberation itself. It can be a vessel. If you think about television, you always have an apartment—people who live in the city and a landscape—and the television set. If you go to the cinema, you have the surroundings of the cinema, and therefore you can put all these questions in a political dimension, in an organizational dimension, in an architectural dimension, and in the architecture of the mind. This is our job, to some extent.

I am a little bit cautious about behaving like an artist, because artists would like to play like children sometimes, but they can't build houses. The Bauhaus was mainly concerned with architecture. That was the center. Around it were all the other arts, then teaching of the arts, then living, then



**After a rally for Christan Democratic Union candidate Franz Josef Strauss during his campaign for chancellor of West Germany, in *Der Kandidat* (*The Candidate*, 1979-80, codirected with Stefan Aust, Alexander von Eschwege, and Volker Schlöndorff).**

Courtesy filmmaker

divorcing. Getting rid of some traditions is perhaps the answer. But you can't give this function—helping people to live and to organize experience—to a single medium. And it's always the same question—not to exclude experience, not to exclude Jews, women, proletarian workers...not to exclude that labor and all of our ancestors who did a lot of that labor. In music we have the possibility of going back and starting once more, with more time. For instance, in Schoenberg we can find sounds that occur in Beethoven's late string quartets or Wagner.

**YR:** Is that why you use so much classical European music?

**AK:** Right. Wagner's complete operas are a horror. Only Hitler could be the German of Wagnerian operas. Ninety percent of the German people didn't understand that music but thought, "If the Fuhrer goes there, everybody has to adore it." This is extremely bad, so now we make—with the help of Luigi Nono—so-called opera perspectives for television. We put the microphone only in the direction of some string parts and the drums. It sounds like a cruel kind of chamber music. With such sound we made an opera clip on *Wieland der Schmied*, a variation on the Daedalus myth for which Wagner has written a libretto but did not compose music.

**YR:** Is this music from the perspective of the "music workers"?

**AK:** Right. It is rather optimistic, believing that labor can liberate itself. But it's more interesting than *Siegfried*. Labor can't learn anything from *Siegfried*, but it could learn or find quite a lot of interest in this man who has the capacity, even though he's lame, to escape. It's not like Engels says—that it's useful to have hands because we use them to work. That's not true at all, because animals, who are our ancestors, first use their hands to grab their mother's neck. Our hands are used for this very personal kind of imprinting or identification, more personal than recognizing a face. This is the way you invent. In such a way we make just six minutes, for instance, with original music from Wagner.

**YR:** Do you ever spell out that is is about the liberation of the worker?

**AK:** No. For instance, I could make a mock interview with a real journalist and a real archaeologist that treated these myths as if they were real.

**EL:** You did that in *The Blind Director*, where you interviewed the producer of the film.

**AK:** The spectator will laugh at that but, while still laughing, starts to believe it. If it is real, as Walter Benjamin says, it exists materially. The spectator can approach, by laughing.

**EL:** And derive pleasure?

**AK:** Yes. But by being analytical.

**YR:** By analytic, do you mean taking a didactic approach?

**AK:** I like didactics, but what I meant here was not didactic. I believe only what my senses know. I believe that myth is reality. I don't know how to describe that, because I use only documentary methods.

**EL:** Do you see your film work as a contribution to the creation of a proletarian public sphere?

**AK:** No. I am the son of a doctor of medicine. I'm not proletarian at all.

**EL:** Then let me drop the word proletarian and say oppositional.

**AK:** That's true. There is public life and the opposition or counter-public life. I understand quite a lot about counter-public life. The excluded proletarian status is repeated within the subject. If you take feelings you feel ashamed of, they work all the time, but they have slave status. Some of our senses, some of our feelings, some of the combinations of mind have slave status and some are dominant. You have within yourself once again class struggles you see outside. Sometimes the struggles have vanished as a phenomenon outside, and you still carry them inside. They have to do with hotels, have to do with toilet habits, with sexuality and so on. It's very complicated because they vanish, but they never give up. No suppression can be definite.

**EL:** Do you mean final?

**AK:** Yes. It appears at another place, with another meaning. You have to translate everything back to its sources. A little bit like with Freud—you can let the patient speak. You come back to the situation and everybody, the chorus, is leaving the room one after the other, until one person is left. Now you can talk with that person and finish something which was not quite finished. And then you take another one, and so on. The art process is analogous with the clinical cure of psychoanalysis, the talking cure, but without power, without manipulation.

This is also the method of analyzing social substance which has vanished and can only be brought back by invisible pictures. But this is very complicated. The book I wrote with Negt, *Public Life and Experience*, is being translated into English. Now we are preparing a very short book on policy—about what is left of the concept of policy if the politicians don't make policy, if they are another kind of administration. They pretend to make politics, but they don't. They don't do anything. Now politics can't manage either.

**EL:** It's got to go elsewhere. Where has it gone?

**AK:** Like in the song of Marlene Dietrich.

**EL:** Where have all the flowers gone?

*Yvonne Rainer is currently working on a film script titled* Privilege.

*Ernest Larsen's videotape,* Out of the Mouth of Babes, *coproduced with Sherry Millner, is included in the Biennial Exhibition at the 1989 Whitney Museum of American Art*

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# A FESTIVAL OF ONE'S OWN: 1989 WOMEN IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR



**Australian women worked the farmlands when their men went off to fight in World War II. Sue Maslin and Sue Hardisty's film on the subject, *Thanks Girls and Goodby*, was one of 80 works shown at the 1989 Women in the Director's Chair festival.**

Courtesy filmmakers

Elfrieda M. Pantoga

The 1989 Women in the Director's Chair film and video festival brought to mind Kim Chernin's examination of the possibility of creating a new mythology for women in *Reinventing Eve*: "We are a domesticated species. We need to take back some of the wildness in us." In its eighth year, the Women in the Director's Chair festival continues to be a showcase for work by women who are in the process of creating a new mythology. And, in a field that continues to be dominated by men (although that is changing slowly), what could be more outrageous—or wild—than women using their creative powers to define who they are and the world around them, rejecting stereotypes and cultural expectations. Providing a forum for these new voices and images is one of WIDC's strengths. What is emerging from this forum is a body of work impressive in its scope, quality, and variety of contents and styles.

The theme of the 1989 festival was "risk." This followed the festival committee's review of all the films, where they found that risk-taking was the connecting thread, festival director Nancy Partos explained. "Risk is represented in so many aspects of film- and videomaking, from the financial backing to the personal side of exposing oneself to artistic risks in deciding to make experimental works or committing yourself to a genre." Panel discussions on the risks of film and video production, exhibition, and distribution set the tone for open discussion and debate in a noncompetitive atmosphere that continued throughout the five-day event.

During two panel sessions, filmmakers, distributors, and exhibitors shared their ideas and accounts of their experiences. Diane Kitchen, whose personal documentary about the Ashanika tribe in Peru, *Before We Knew Nothing*, was shown at the festival, talked about the process of decision-making she engaged in. "[Filmmakers are] making choices constantly—about how to approach the material. My decision was to make a more personal film, to try to transfer the feel of the place and the people," she said, noting that instead of standing back from her subjects her "inclination was to get as close to the people as I could when I was filming them." In doing so, she risked exposing herself. "If [the subjects] are letting you in, you have to let them in too."

Fern Cristell from D.E.C. films in Toronto talked about the difficulties the organization encountered in building its new 250-seat, state-of-the-art multi-media theater, the Euclid, where it will exhibit independent and alternative works. It is scheduled to open in May. "D.E.C. distributes films from Asia, Africa, and Latin America and distributes films on environmental, peace, and social issues of all kinds—the concerns of women, gays, and lesbians," she said, noting that the organization's biggest challenge is to educate and develop audiences.

Zainub Verjee said that one of her greatest risks as a staff member of Vancouver Women in Focus Arts and Media Center was her decision to speak out about the organization's relative neglect of promotion of the work of women of color. She then told how last year she and a colleague, Lorraine Chan, began organizing In Visible Colours, a film and video festival featuring the works of women of color and Third World women, which will be held next November 15 to 19 in Vancouver.

Taking the theme of risk in another direction,

Barbara Scharres, director of the Film Center of the Art Institute of Chicago, sparked a debate when she suggested that by showing films at women's festivals, women film- and videomakers risk having their work categorized. "I personally have always felt a little bit of resistance to the idea of segregating women's work. In the past there has been more of a reason to do that, to bring awareness to women's film, but right now at least, I don't want to see women's work separated," said Scharres. She then urged the filmmakers in the audience to seek a variety of venues. During the discussion that followed, videomaker Margo Starr Kernan, who had two tapes in the festival, seemed to sum up the general feeling of the audience in her response. "This is an incredibly important experience for me as a 61-year-old videomaker. It isn't that I feel marginalized. I feel validated and confirmed." Gretchen Elsner-Sommer, one of the festival organizers, added that getting to the point where women's films become integrated into the mainstream may take a long time and festivals like WIDC are part of that process. She encouraged the audience and panel members to continue thinking and talking about this issue.

The atmosphere of open-ended discussion was enhanced by the festival's physical layout, which included two screening locations and a hospitality room. Some films and videos were screened in the 200-seat Chicago Filmmakers Theater on Chicago's North Side, a media center which shows independent and experimental works. A second video screening room with two monitors and seating about 100 was set up in a sound studio a few doors away from Filmmakers. The hospitality room, where filmmakers and viewers gathered to exchange information, relax, and talk, was set up in the Chicago Post Gallery, adjacent to the lobby of Filmmakers. For the duration of the festival, the gallery featured an exhibition of art by women.

About 80 works were shown at 24 screenings over a period of five days. Last year's six-day festival attracted close to 1,000 people. This year's five-day festival drew about 1,200, according to festival committee member Patricia Martin. Press coverage of the event, according to Partos, included articles in the *Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times, Chicago Reader, Chicago* magazine, the gay and lesbian press, as well as community and college newspapers.

Seven of the festival screenings were sold out, including one comprising films about relationships, a documentary program, and two evenings featuring lesbian-related films. Several other works in the program also stood out. Among these were Cynthia Cohn's *Lovestruck*, a sometimes humorous, sometimes chilling, but always compelling look at obsessive relationships that offered a surprisingly upbeat resolution, and Marily Wulff's short *Little Stories*, a witty, offbeat look at childhood memories. Another was Margo Starr Kernan's poetic experimental video, *Breaking and Entering*, which explores depression and anxiety in the nuclear age and suggests creativity as an


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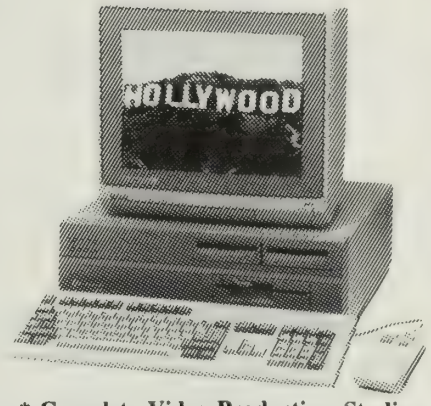
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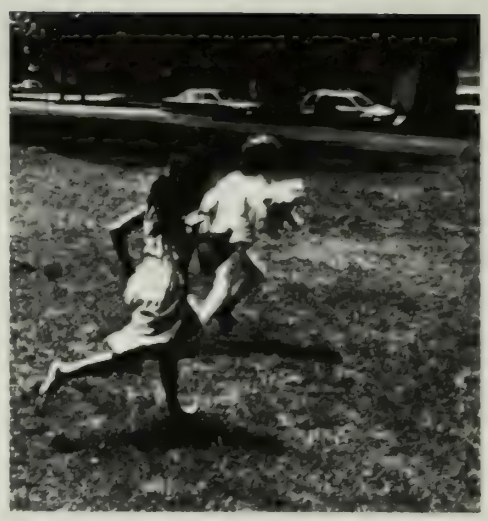
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avenue for escape. On a different note, Kitchen's *Before We Knew Nothing* captures a way of life in the rain forest that is quickly disappearing.

Two moving and informative films about the unsung accomplishments of women were Sue Maslin and Sue Hardisty's *Thanks Girls and Goodbye*, about the women who worked on farms in Australia to raise food for the war effort during World War II while the men were fighting, and Diane Garey's *Sentimental Women Need Not Apply*, a history of the nursing profession. Both films used interviews interspersed with archival film footage. Maslin, who traveled to the festival from Australia, was one of several filmmakers attending who stayed for discussion with audience members after the screenings. She said that few people in Australia even knew about the efforts of the "land girls," and until recently their contribution to the national defense had not been recognized.

Casi Pacilio and L.M. Keys' feature film, *Out of Our Time*, drew a sell-out crowd. The black-and-white film interweaves the stories of two women—a contemporary lesbian feminist and her grandmother, who was part of a literary circle in 1930. Stylish and frank, with an quirky humor, *Out of Our Time* focuses on women helping women reach their creative potential as well as offering a positive, nonstereotypical image of lesbians.

Two works in the program offered very different, but equally compelling, views of aging. Sue Marx and Pamela Conn's captivating documentary *Young at Heart* is a tribute to two engaging octogenarians with a zest for life despite personal tragedies. Cecilia Condit's fictional videotape *Not a Jealous Bone* creates a mythology of aging through one woman's pain and anger, and, finally, her triumph. Also, two outstanding works on social issues that I screened as a festival judge in the documentary category were *Inside Life Outside*, a documentary by Sachiko Hamada and Scott Sinkler that follows the plight of a "family" of homeless people who live in a shantytown on New York's Lower East Side, and Nancy Kalow's *Sadobabies: Runaways in San Francisco*, a raw, disturbing look at street kids.

The festival also paid tribute to the National

**Margot Starr Kernan's *Breaking and Entering* is a poetic experimental videotape set in California during the Cold War.**

Courtesy videomaker

Film Board of Canada and its Studio D, which has been devoted to the production of films for and about Canadian women. Among the works shown from this group were *Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief*, by Carol Geddes, the Academy-Award winner *If You Love This Planet*, by Terri Nash, and *Flamenco at 5:15*, by Cynthia Scott.

The overall impact of showing this range of work by women was one of validation. What emerged were fresh, energizing images of women seldom seen in the mainstream, accompanied by an invigorating discussion of ideas seldom valued. The challenge for filmmakers and organizations engaged in this kind of work continues to be building new audiences. The process may be slow, but the building materials are available as networks of support develop. Such networks—along with their counterparts in literature, music, and art—play an important role in bringing to light new mythologies, not just for women but for everyone.

*Elfrieda M. Pantoga is the arts and entertainment editor and film critic for the* Milwaukee Sentinel.

# IN BRIEF

This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the **FIVF Festival Bureau.** Listings do not constitute an endorsement & since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. If your experience differs from our account, please let us know so we can improve our reliability.

## Domestic

CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CHILDREN'S FILMS, Oct. 13-22, IL. Thoughtful, well-made children's entertainment programs suitable for children under 13 are basis of competitive fest, now in 6th yr. Last yr over 100 films from 16 countries screened, w/ audiences of close to 10,000 & many European & US distribs of film, cable & home video attend, as well as media librarians & educators. Jury, as well as filmmakers, critics, educators & psychologists, incl. children 6-12; children in audience cast votes for most popular film. Cats, by length: features (over 60 min.), shorts 15-60 min., shorts under 15 min. All cats accept live action & animation; TV productions accepted in cats of single program & programs from series. No instructional/educ. work accepted. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 1/2". Deadline: July 1. NY contact: Susan Delson, (212) 571-1852. Contact: Debbie Berger, Facets Multimedia, 1517 W. Fullerton Ave., Chicago, IL 60614; (312) 281-9075; telex: 20-6701; fax: (312) 929-5437.

COLUMBUS INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 25-29, OH. Held for last 36 yrs, fest accepts films, TV spots & video produced since 1987. Cats: art/culture, business/industry, education, health/medicine, religion/ethics, social studies, travel. Awards: Chris statuette to top winners in each cat. (doc feature winners qualify for Academy Award entry), Bronze Plaque to runners-up & certificates of honorable mention. Special awards incl. top President's Award, award for screenwriting (add'l $35 entry fee), Christopher Columbus Award to most original, innovative production, Ben Franklin Award in Media of Print cat. (add'l $35 entry fee). Entry fees, based on length, range from $70 for shorts to $350 for TV series. Formats: 16mm, 1/2". Deadline: July 15. Contact: Nancy Maxwell, Film Council of Greater Columbus, 1229 W. 3rd Ave., Columbus, OH 43212; (614) 291-2149.

FILM ARTS FESTIVAL, Nov. 2-5, CA. Regional showcase for new ind. film & video by N. California artists only.


# BLUE•COYOTE•FILM•FESTIVAL

The Blue Coyote is seeking short films for participation in the upcoming Blue Coyote Film Festival to be held in New York City during the week of December 3, 1989. Blue Coyote is accepting films in six categories: Narrative, Animated (including Picsolated, and Computer generated), Documentary and Experimental, Music Video and Student Work. In order to maintain the fairest judging standard the festival has subdivided each category into particular time groups.

**•Maximum time on any film is 30 minutes**



***NARRATIVE: (5 minutes or under), (5-30 minutes)***
***ANIMATED: (5 minutes or under)***
***DOCUMENTARY: (5 minutes or under), (5-30 minutes)***
***EXPERIMENTAL: (5 minutes or under), (5-30 minutes)***
***MUSIC VIDEO: (Time is only determined by song length)***
***STUDENT WORK: (5 minutes or under), (5-30 minutes)***



**•Deadline for submission to the festival is September 15, 1989**

The Blue Coyote was created to allow gifted young filmmakers the opportunity to have their work seen and appreciated not only for the time of the festival, but also the chance to have his/her work placed on a winners' compilation video to be distributed nationally under the auspices of the festival. Blue Coyote is also working in conjunction with several large cable networks to enable festival participants the further chance of having their work viewed on television.

Through our sponsorship Blue Coyote is also offering a cash and/or service and/or equipment prizes to the winners, as well as a production grant.

Completed work **must be submitted for viewing on 1/2" or 3/4" video tape.** Rough cuts will be accepted if the work in progress can be assured of completion by October 15, 1989. (Works in progress may still be shown at the festival if the judges feel that it is appropriate, but will not be eligible for awards) — All films entered must be accompanied by a brief synopsis as to content and context (Judges will make final decision as to category placement). Please provide personal contacting information on the same sheet.

Final judging will begin after the September 15 deadline, but films will be viewed as they are received -- so early submissions are greatly appreciated.

**Entry fees for work submitted are $35.00 for all work (in any category), and $30.00 for any student film submitted.**

Please make check or money orders payable to **Blue Coyote Inc.** Entries and payment to be sent to **217 East 85th Street, Suite 340, New York, NY 10028. Telephone (212) 439-1158.**

Now celebrating 5th anniv., fest programs more than 50 works of all lengths & genres, arranged in thematic groups according to submissions received. Special feature is open-screen evening, showing shorts submitted by artists on 1st-come basis the previous week. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Contact: Robert Hawk, Film Arts Foundation, 346 Ninth St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103, (415) 552-0602.

Intercom Industrial Film and Video Festival, October, IL. Competitive fest for industrial films in cats of dental science, documentary, drug abuse, environment, education, fundraising, fashion, music video, human relations, medicine, personal counseling, public relations, recreation, religion, research, safety, sales/marketing, training, travel/transportation. Films/tapes produced from May 1988-July 1989 eligible. Handling fees: $80-120. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: July 31. Contact: Intercom, Cinema Chicago, 415 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, IL 60610-9990; (312) 644-3400; telex: 936086 CHI FEST CGO.

New York Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival, Sept. 18-24, NY. 3rd edition of expanded fest will be held at Anthology Film Archives. Audiences of over 1,500 in '88 made it one of largest experimental film events in NYC. Over 2,000 saw selections from fest in 12 cities in US, Canada & Europe. Entries should have significant gay presence/perspective. Entries by people of color. Honorarium: $100. Program last yr incl. 62 films by 58 filmmakers. Formats: 16mm, super 8; preview on cassette. No entry fee; incl. return postage. Deadline: July 1. Contact: Jim Hubbard, NY Lesbian & Gay Experimental Film Festival, 503 Broadway, Rm. 503, New York, NY 10012; (212) 865-1499.

## Foreign

Kijkhuis World Wide Video Festival, September, The Hague, Netherlands. One of world's premiere int'l festivals for ind. video, presenting over 100 tapes, installations, performances & video-related new media. Now in 8th yr, fest has become major meeting place for videomakers, producers, distribs & large audience. Competition awards 4 productions, incl. 1 installation. Entries also run on local cable TV. Formats: 3/4", 1/2", 2", 1", Betacam. Deadline: June 30. Contact: Kijkhuis World Wide Video Festival, Noordeinde 140, 2514 GP Den Haag, Netherlands; tel: (070) 644805.

Klagenfurt International Juvenale for Young Film and Video Amateurs, Aug. 24-27, Austria. Young people under 26 yrs invited to submit nonprofessional work, to be judged by young jury. Awards incl. 1 Gold Award (1st prize), 2 Silver Awards (2nd prize), 3 Bronze Awards (3rd prize), other special prizes. All participants receive certificate of participation. Cats by ages: up to 15 yrs; 15-18, 18-26. Formats: 16mm, super 8. Deadline: July 31. Contact: Organisationkomitee-Juvenale, F.X. David, Fischlstrasse 55, A-9020 Klagenfurt, Austria.

London International Film Festival, November, England. 1989 will mark 33rd yr of invitational "festival of festivals," known for presenting highlights of yr's int'l cinema to British audiences of over 60,000. Last yr more than 140 features & 35 shorts from 35 countries shown. Sidebar lectures & screenings also presented. According to director Sheila Whitaker, more & more foreign buyers attend & press coverage is "enormous." Special small video section inaugurated 2 yrs ago features productions from North & Central America, Britain, France, Italy & Spain. Fest is noncompetitive, but awards British Film Institute prize for most original & imaginative film. Fiction & documentary accepted, any lengths, all genres. All entries must be British premieres. No entry fees. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, 3/4".

Fest historically has expressed commitment to US independent films & this yr will present US selections in a special section. FIVF will cooperate with fest director Sheila Whitaker in selecting these films. Preview cassettes (3/4" & 1/2" only) will be collected at FIVF office, sent to London in group shipment & returned to NY after screening. For info & appl., contact: Kathryn Bowser, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400. Deadline: July 1. After that, entries may be sent until Aug. 1 to England: Sheila Whitaker, director, London International Film Festival, National Film Theatre, South Bank, Waterloo, London SE1 8XT, England; tel: (01) 928-3535; telex: 929220 NATFIL G; fax: (01) 633-9323.

Montreal World Film Festival, Aug. 24-Sept. 4, Canada. As N. America's premiere competitive fest, Montreal, now 13 yrs old, attracts huge int'l crowds for each edition (over 280,000 reported last yr) & shows large number of films (356 last yr: 232 features from 47 countries & 124 shorts). Official competition awards Grand Prize of the Americas by 8 member int'l jury. Shorts accepted for competition must be under 15 min. Other sections this yr: Hors Concours (out of competition); Indian Cinema of Today, Latin American Cinema of Today; Cinema of Today & Tomorrow (new trends); Panorama Canada; TV Films; Tributes. Adjunct 6 day Int'l Film, TV & Video Market last yr had 850 participants. Entries must be Canadian premieres, completed in 12 mos. prior to fest. Formats: official competition: 70mm, 35mm; other sections also accept 16mm & 3/4". Deadline: July 14. Contact: Serge Losique, fest director, Montreal World Film Festival, 1455 de Maisonneuve W., Montreal, Canada H3G 1M8; tel: (514) 848-3883/933-9699; telex: 05-25472 WOFILMFEST; fax: (514) 848-3886.

Ökomedia International Ecological Film Festival, Nov. 1-5, W. Germany. Contemporary ecological films focus of competitive fest, now in 6th yr. Nature films, didactic films on conservation & environmental issues, animated films accepted. Special emphasis changes each yr; this yr focus will be environmental films from N. America, particularly ones dealing w/ more recent US/Canadian ecological issues & ecology in 3rd World. Accepted filmmakers invited to fest to show films & lead discussions. Int'l jury confers cash & other prizes. Attended by TV programmers, distributors, film critics & journalists. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: July 15. Send tapes to US contact: Heidi Knott, c/o Lorna Knott, 4038 Moratalla Terr., San Diego, CA 92130; (619) 755-6788. Address in W. Germany: Ökomedia Institut e.V., Münchhofstr. 12, D-78 Freiburg, W. Germany; tel: (0761) 309 39.

Riena/International Festival of Films on the Environment and Nature, Sept. 26-Oct. 1, France. Held in 17th century town of Rochefort-sur-mer, competitive fest will present large selection of short films participating in competitive section and in late evening screenings of feature films. Entries should relate either to nature or pollution, ecosystems, etc. W/in fest framework, int'l fest of industrial films on environment—w/ separate jury of scientists, industrialists & media reps—will accept short films & videos. Cats: investigative journalism, doc, fiction/drama, animation. Prizes: Town of Rochefort Prize, Foundation for the Control of Nature & the Environment (AFEMEN) Prize, honorific prize from French Ministry of Environment, FR3 Poitou-Charentes (regional French TV channel) Prize. Fest is now in 8th yr. Films must be completed after Jan. 1, 1988 & not previously shown at fest or on French TV. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 1/2" (PAL). Fest sponsors Int'l Market for Audiovisual Works on Environment, which accepts films not yet seen in Europe. Specifically looks for fiction feature or powerful feature docs to be featured in gala evening presentation. Debates & conferences scheduled on ozone layer, rivers, nature & land conservancy, control of energy, gardens & special int'l gathering on communications for environmental matters. Films relating to these topics sought, e.g., films on Mississippi or Amazon Rivers, or on the recent oil spill in Alaska. FIVF will cooperate w/ RIENA fest rep Martine Lumbroso in selection of US films. Deadline: July 28. For further info & appl., contact: Kathryn Bowser, FIVF Festival Bureau, 625 Broadway, 9th Fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400.

San Sebastian International Film Festival, Sept. 14-23, Spain. Now in 37th yr, this is 1 of Spain's major competitive fests, w/ about 130 films screened annually. Sections incl. official competition, Zabaltegi (open zone) & Breakfast w/ Diamonds (marketplace). Several Spanish theatrical distributors & TV buyers attend. Competition films (primarily more commercial works) must be 35mm, produced in preceding 12 mos & not shown in other competitive fests. 35mm shorts under 30 min. accepted for screening in competition. Zabaltegi section accepts 35mm & 16mm films & may accept narrative/experimental works. Int'l jury awards: Great Gold Shell for best feature, Gold Shell for best short, special jury prize, San Sebastian Prize for best director & prizes to best actor/actress. 1st or 2nd feature film directors in any fest section eligible for a $50,000 prize donated by CIGA Hotel chain. Film must be presented w/ Spanish subtitles. Wendy Lidell, fest's US representative, hosts director Galan during US selections, also prescreening & selecting entries year round. Deadline in NY is July 1. Interested filmmakers should contact her immediately: c/o International Film Circuit, 383 Lafayette St., Ste. 303, New York, NY 10012; (212) 475-8237; fax: (212) 529-5328. Fest deadline: Aug. 1. Fest address: Diego Galan, director, San Sebastian International Film Festival, Apartado de Correos, 397, 20080 San Sebastian, Spain; tel: 43-429625; telex: 38145 FCSS E.

São Paolo International Film Festival, Oct 15-31, Brazil. Int'ly recognized as showcase for avant-garde, independent & uncoventional films, this noncompetitive fest now enters 13th yr after rumors that last yr's edition would be the last. Organizers plan to invite about 100 films from 35 countries. Fest will also invite 10-20 directors & pay airfare & accommodations. Local audience of about 150,000 enthusiastically welcomes & supports fest. Program incl. official selection as well as retrospectives, tributes & special events. Special programs this yr incl. pkg. of psychotronic films & Buster Keaton retro. Although noncompetitive, audience rates films & favorite receives prize, Bandeira Paulista. Entries must be produced after Jan. 1987 & not shown in Brazil. Features & shorts of all themes & cats accepted. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: June 30. Contact: Leon Cakoff, Mostra Internacional de Cinema São Paolo, Al. Lorena, 937 Cj. 302, São Paolo, 01424, Brazil; tel: 883-5137; telex: (11) 25043.

Toronto Festival of Festivals, Sept. 7-16, Canada.

14th annual celebration for noncompetitive fest, which serves as launching pad for many films & major Canadian showcase for int'l films. Last yr 279 films from 39 countries screened to overflow audiences of over 250,000. Cats: Nightly Galas (premieres of major features); Contemporary World Cinema; Perspective Canada, New Visions/New Voices; Special Presentations; National Cinema; Archival Program; Spotlight. Audience votes on most popular film. Entries must be Canadian premieres completed after Sept. 1, 1988. Features & docs accepted; shorts selected from Canada only. Last yr fest ran offical sales office in joint venture w/ Ontario Film Development Corp., w/ 83 official buyers from US, France, Germany, Japan & England. Fest also hosts 3-day Trade Forum w/ int'l speakers, events, displays & workshops. Several film luminaries & media execs attend. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: July 15. Contact: Helga Stephenson, director/Piers Handling, program director/Kay Armatage, Dimitri Eipides, David Overbey, programmers, Festival of Festivals, 69 Yorkville Ave., Suite 205, Toronto, Canada M5R 1B8; (416) 967-7371; telex: 06-219724 FILMCONS; fax: (416) 967-9477.

TURIN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 10-18, Italy. Works by young filmmakers from all genres showcased, esp. films representing formal & linguistic innovations & focusing on themes concerning young people. Fest seeks out alternative, politically controversial & difficult films. Local audiences & int'l guests attend crowded screenings & stimulating press conferences. Last yr over 300 productions shown to audiences of 75,000 w/ over 150 journalists attending. Now in 7th yr, northern Italian fest has rich history of programming new independent US work & several filmmakers have been invited to attend w/ films (fest provides round trip airfare, hotel & meals for filmmakers in feature section; all other participants receive hospitality). Prizes incl. cash & plaques. Feature competition accepts works produced w/in 12 mos. preceding fest. A 5 person int'l jury awards Best Film & 2 Special Jury Awards; special mentions also awarded. Short (under 30 min.) & medium length (max. 60 min.) competition awards Best Short & Best Medium-Length Awards. Retrospective section focuses on different nat'l cinema each yr, this yr on Italian Neorealist Movement. Entries must be Italian premieres. All entries must incl 5 stills, synopsis, press materials & transcript/dialogue list (if avail.). Entry fee: $10 features, $5 shorts, payable to Cross Productions. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: July 31. Michael Solomon, fest's NY rep, will collect & prescreen all US entries in NY & ship to Italy at fest's expense. He advises entrants to apply early. Contact: Michael Solomon, c/o FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th Fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 941-8389 or (212) 473-3400.

VARNA WORLD ANIMATED FILM FESTIVAL, October, Bulgaria. Biennial competitive fest, now in 6th edition. About 1,000 guests attend. Films awarded at Annecy or Zagreb not eligible. Cats: animated films up to 5 min., 5-15 min. & over 15 min.; children's animated film; film produced for TV series; educational; director's debut. Prizes accompanied by cash awards. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: mid-July. Contact: Orlin Filipov, director, Varna World Animation Festival, c/o International Film Festivals General Management, 1, Bulgaria Sq., 1414 Sofia, Bulgaria; tel: 589159; telex: 22059 FESTIN BG.


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**In William Farley's dramatic feature *Of Men and Angels*, Padric Reilly (John Molloy), elder statesman of the Irish literary world, bends the ear of Mike O'Donahue (Jack Byrne), an Irish-American writer in the post-Beat tradition.**

Courtesy filmmaker

**Salvadorans speak of their commitments to social justice in the video documentary *The People Will Not Be Silent*, by Dorie Krauss and Susie Sluyter.**

Courtesy videomakers

## Renee Tajima

Berkeley-based filmmaker William Farley opened his new "no budget feature," **Of Men and Angels**, in the dramatic competition section at the United States Film Festival last January. The movie's story, coauthored by Farley with Deborah Rogin and Marjorie Berger, centers on one week in the lives of three strong-willed individuals. Mike O'Donahue (Jack Byrne) is a taxi driver and unrequited Irish-American writer in the post-Beat tradition. He lives with Maria Montoya (Theresa Saldana), a beautiful, cultured Salvadoran who has conceived his child and wants Mike to live up to the new responsibilities of fatherhood. When Irish literary maverick Reilly (John Molloy) falls into their lives. the three are confronted with the struggle for control of their own dreams—and of each other. *Of Men and Angels*: William Farley Film Group, 2600 Tenth St., Ste. 415, San Francisco, CA 94710; (415) 549-0944.

Codirectors Dorie Krauss and Susie Sluyter present a video collage of the popular social movements that are transforming El Salvador in their new 30-minute documentary, **The People Will Not Be Silent**. Filled with glimpses of Salvadoran life, campesinos as well as labor activists, and human rights workers speak of their lives and their commitment to social justice in El Salvador. Their personal testimonies and recent footage expose the counterinsurgency policies of the Salvadoran and United States governments in the war-torn Central American country. The producers are self-distributing the tape as an organizing, fundraising, and educational tool, in addition to making it available to individuals and community organizations for purchase on a sliding scale. Its production was made possible through grants from the A.J. Muste Memorial Institute. the Haymarket People's Fund, and the New England War Tax Resistance. *The People Will Not Be Silent*: Susie Sluyter, 306 Summer St., Somerville, MA 02144; (617) 628-5368.

Based in nearby Cambridge, Massachusetts, C.L. Monrose has completed **Of Snakes, Moons and Frogs** in coproduction with the Newton Television Foundation. Interweaving such disparate elements as the voices of pre-Biblical goddesses, feminist auto mechanics, advertising imagery from the 1930s, and the thoughts of contemporary teenagers, Monrose creates a collage of voices and images that forces the viewer to confront his or her feelings about feminism. Says Monrose, "In the four years of making this film, I was at first absorbed and then overwhelmed by the intensity and variety of voices and images that needed to be seen and heard. I wanted to include all these voices and out of that came the experimental collage form of the piece." An experimental documentary that attempts to define a new female spirit, *Of Snakes, Moons and Frogs* had its world premiere at the Global Village Documentary Festival in New York City last May. *Of Snakes, Moons and Frogs*: Elaine Haffey or Tony Fusco, Newton Television Foundation, 1608 Beacon St., Waban, MA 02168; (617) 965-8477.

Sans narrator or linear narrative, **Rummage** is Albert Gabriel Nigrin's experimental documentary of the legendary Rummage Sale organized by the Visiting Nurse Association of Somerset Hills, New Jersey. Every first weekend of the month, from May to October, the nurses sponsor the sale at a location in Far Hills. Nigrin shot the event over a three year period on Tri-X black and white film stock, in an attempt to capture the full range of emotions at the sale: the shouts of anticipation when the tents open in the morning, the mulling over unidentifiable objects, the fierce competition for bargains, the frustration over long waits to enter the popular Kitchen Goods and Women's Clothing departments. The soundtrack primarily consists of interviews with staff and their customers, colored by ambient sounds of the sale. Nigrin directed, shot, and edited the 25-minute film with funding from the National Endowment for the Arts/American Film Institute MidAtlantic Region Media Arts Fellowship. *Rummage*: Albert Gabriel Nigrin, Light Pharmacy Films, 55 Louis St., New Brunswick, NJ 08901; (201) 249-9623.

**Haunted**, a new short by filmmaker Webster Lewin, had its broadcast premiere on PBS' *American Playhouse* series as a companion piece to the feature *Stand and Deliver*. *Haunted* is a psychological drama that explores the fantasies of a young man obsessed by a woman. The film is a game of perception, manipulating the levels of time and space, as it is played out on the early morning sidewalks of New York. In it, two locations are juxtaposed. One is a point of observa-

AIVF members are invited to submit detailed information about film/video work that is in production or has recently been completed for inclusion in **In and Out of Production**. Send descriptions and black and white photographs to: *The Independent*, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012, Attn: In and Out of Production.



tion; the other, the field to be observed. Levels of time are shifted, as present, past, and future appear compressed into one moment. The observer is Robert (James Sterling); his object is girlfriend Francine (Rebecca Downs), whose apartment he keeps under constant surveillance. *Haunted* was also screened in the Panorama section of the 1989 Berlin International Film Festival last February. *Haunted*: Camera Nine Entertainment, 434 W. 120th St., New York, NY 10027; (212) 749-4443, or 5755 Southminster, Houston, TX 77035; (713) 729-3470.

Television and radio personality Casey Kasem narrates **Planting Seeds for Peace**, a new video documentary that promotes intercultural dialogue and understanding in the Middle East. The 23-minute program by Marlene Ginsberg of Legacy International focuses on the relationships among four Israeli Arab, Jewish, and Palestinian teenagers. When they come together in the United States to offer their perspectives on the Middle East conflict with American youth, they also share with each other their cultures, discuss personal lives, and counteract stereotypes, thus developing close friendships and a better mutual understanding. The tape comes with a leader's guide written by Kenneth Cushner, the assistant director of the Center for Intercultural Education at Kent State University. *Planting Seeds for Peace*: Educational Film and Video Project, 5332 College Ave., Ste. 101, Oakland, CA 94618; (415) 655-9050.

Our fears are our enemy. They are deep inside waiting for a moment of weakness to jump and take over our lives. Those fears, unless we confront them, might become our killers. That is the backdrop to **The Housewarming**, a new 35mm feature film in production by writer-director-producer Osama Kattan. The story begins on Halloween night in 1959, a suspense thriller that—after some unexpected events—jumps 30 years ahead to the present. Centered on the retirement community, a forgotten segment of society, the characters of *The Housewarming* struggle to survive in a night wrapped in death and trapped by destiny. Not a special effects extravaganza or slice 'em, dice 'em horror movie, *The Housewarming* stars veteran actors Richard Harrison and Troy Donahue and was shot on location in Los Angeles and Phoenix, Arizona. *The Housewarming*: 2001 Art and Entertainment, Box 48408, Phoenix, AZ 85075; (602) 848-6004.


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Deadlines for **Classifieds** will be respected. These are the 8th of each month, **two months** prior to the cover date, e.g., June 8 for the August/September issue. Make check or money order—no cash, please—payable to FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.

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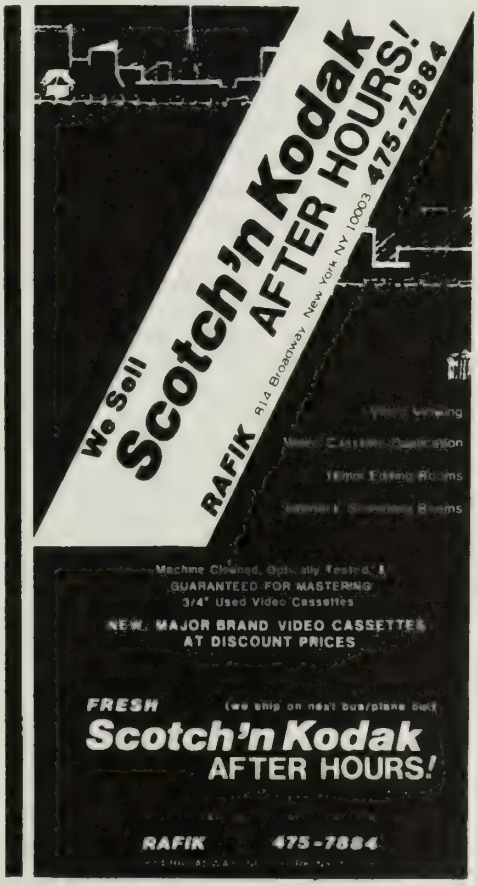
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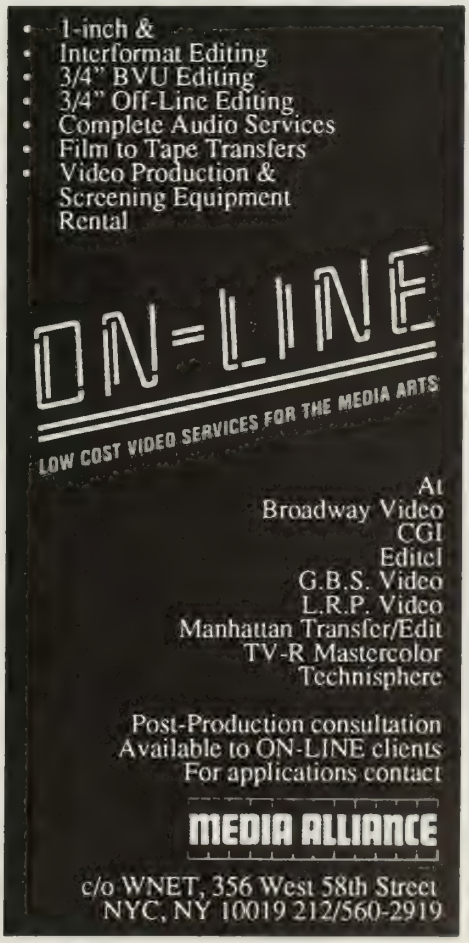
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## Conferences • Workshops

35TH ROBERT FLAHERTY SEMINAR: Aug. 12-19 at Wells College, Aurora, New York, sponsored by International Film Seminars. The week-long seminar will explore some of the ways films and tapes reveal cultures, with emphasis on Third World & minority film & video artists. Programmed by Pearl Bowser in association w/ Louis Massiah & Grant Munro. Contact: Sally Berger, Exec. Dir., IFS, 305 W. 21st St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 727-7262.

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INTERNATIONAL FILM & TV WORKSHOPS: Summer catalog lists more than 60 1-wk workshops & 3-day seminars for film & TV professionals. Courses available in all aspects of the industry, incl. careers, producing, development, scriptwriting, directing, acting, technology, lighting, sound & music, documentaries, editing & corporate video. Contact: The Film Workshops, 2 Central St., Rockport, ME 04856; (207) 236-8581, fax (207) 236-2558.

AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE SEMINARS & WORKSHOPS: Through a Writer's Eyes: The Structure Behind The Story, June 2-3; Directors' Techniques to Inspire Actors, June 17; Making A Film & Keeping It, June 17; Production Mgmt., June 3 & 4; Film & Video Financing Through Limited Partnerships, June 10; Job Search Strategies for The Entertainment Profession, June 10; Creating Contemporary Concepts for Motion Pictures, June 24. At AFI Campus. Contact: Public Service Programs, AFI, Box 2799, 2021 N. Western Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90027; (800) 999-4AFI; (213) 856-7690.

SUMMER PROGRAM IN ARTS MGMT: Intro & Refresher: July 12-14 at U. Mass., Amherst, sponsored by Arts Extension Service. Contact: Craig Dreeszen, Educ. Coord., Arts Extension Service, Div. of Continuing Educ., U. Mass., Amherst, MA 01003; (413) 545-2360.

YELLOWSTONE SUMMER FILM/VIDEO INSTITUTE at Montana State Univ. incls workshops, screenings & group sessions. Credit or noncredit registration. Scriptwriting, June 12-23; Directing, June 19-23; Native Amer. Film & Video, June 26-30; Autobiographical & Personal Film, June 26-30; Scandinavian Film & TV, June 26-July 7. Contact: Extended Studies, Montana State Univ., Bozeman, MT 59717; (406) 994-6683.

131ST SMPTE TECHNICAL CONFERENCE & EQUIPMENT EXHIBIT: Los Angeles Convention Center, Oct. 21-25. 1989 theme: Tradition & Technology—Partners in Progress. Call for papers deadline: June 15. Abstract must be accompanied by author form. Contact: Marilyn Waldman, program coord., SMPTE, 595 W. Hartsdale Ave., White Plains, NY 10607; (914) 761-1100.

6TH ANNUAL ATLANTIC FILM & VIDEO PRODUCERS CONFERENCE: June 22, 25 at Stanhope-by-the-Sea, Prince Edward Island, Canada, sponsored by Island Media Arts Co-op. Conf. provides forum for ind. producers in Atlantic region of Canada to meet w/ reps from industry in N. Amer. & abroad. Seminars incl. distribution, publicity, script development & regional industry development & resources. Contact: Peter Richards, Coordinator, Atlantic Film & Video Producers Conf., Box 2726, Charlottetown, PEI, Canada, C1A 8C3; tel: (902) 892-3131; fax: (902) 566-1724.

NATIONAL ASSN. OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS OFFICERS & ADVISORS 1989 Regional Conference: Albany, NY, June 8-10. Contact: NATOA Regional Telecommunications Conf., Nat'l League of Cities, 1301 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20004; (202) 626-3160.

MAKING A GOOD SCRIPT GREAT: 2-day seminar on successful scriptwriting led by Linda Seger & sponsored by Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Univ. Outreach. Participants learn to build story structure, ideas & characters while giving clarity to writing. Held in Dallas, June 3-4. Fee: $165. Contact: University Outreach; (414) 227-3236.

MEDIA TRAINING AT FILM/VIDEO ARTS: Prof. instruction in all areas of film & video prod. at beginning & intermediate levels, incl. 16mm film prod., 16mm film editing, video prod., video editing, screenwriting, directing, fundraising, prod. mgmt & intro to digital effects. Hands-on seminar w/ Arriflex; June 29: SAG and the Ind. Filmmaker; July 8 & 9: Producing an "Ultra" Low-Budget Feature. Scholarships avail. for Blacks, Latinos, Asians & Native Americans residing in NYS. Contact: Media Training, F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9361.

INTERNATIONAL MEETING of Latin American independent videomakers, June 19-23, Cochabamba, Bolivia. South and N. Americans will meet to discuss on-going efforts to organize int'l union of ind./community videomakers. For info, write: Cochabomba 89, Casilla 4344, Cochabomba, Bolivia; tel: 042-49971; telex: 6267 INEDER bv. Or call Martha Wallner at Deep Dish TV, (212) 420-9045.

3RD WORLD & MINORITY PROGRAMMING CONFERENCE: Sponsored by Rockefeller Foundation, New York State Council on the Arts & Film News Now Foundation, to be held Sept. 1989 in New York City. Contact: Willie Boston, NYSCA, 915 Broadway, New York, NY 10010; (212) 614-3985.

## Films • Tapes Wanted

WANTED: Quality short films for worldwide distribution. Submit screening cassette w/ SASE to: Hargrove Entertainment, Box 338, Forest Hills, NY 11375-9998; (718) 657-0542.

FILM CRASH, a regular screening space for ind. films in NYC, seeks work for exhibition. Contact: Scott Saunders, (718) 643-6085, or send VHS tape with return postage to: Film Crash, 423 Atlantic Ave., #4A, Brooklyn, NY 11217.

TBS PRODUCTIONS is currently accepting independent documentary films and videotapes for a weekly series for TNT, Turner Network Television. Topics cover broad range, but center mostly on human nature. Fees negotiable. Interested parties should send 1/2" or 3/4" videotape for preview to: Craig Duff, associate producer, TBS Productions, 1 CNN Center, 6th fl. North Tower, Atlanta, GA 30348-5366; (404) 827-3244.

IN THE FUTURE PERFECT seeks short work for 1st fest of ind. work in New Orleans. 1/2", 3/4" video & 16mm, super 8 film accepted. Deadline: June 19. Contact: John Dooley, In the Future Perfect, 1921 Sophie Wright Pl., New Orleans, LA 70130; (504) 525-7706.

## Opportunities • Gigs

CHANNEL L WORKING GROUP: Seeks student interns & volunteers for location camerawork, lighting, audio & video recorders. Production experience also offered on special projects, e.g. docs, PSAs & training tapes. No previous experience required. CLWG provides all necessary training. Must be available to work 16 hrs/wk, primarily day work. Contact: Intern Supervisor, Channel L Working Group, 51 Chambers St., Rm. 532, New York, NY 10007; (212) 964-2960.

WRITERS, DIRECTORS, VIDEOGRAPHERS, Designers, Musicians, etc.: Freedom Unlimited is interested in joining w/ others in film & video field to combine talents & resources for establishment of group to develop money-making projects. Write: Freedom Unlimited, 90 Fifth Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11217.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Collective for Living Cinema seeks candidate w/ minimum 2-5 yrs. administrative experience. Send cover letter, resume & 3 letters of reference to: Search Comm., Collective for Living Cinema, 41 White St., New York, NY 10013.

FEATURE FILM EDITORS sought for interviews for book. Mention credentials and best day/hr to contact. Write: LindaAnn Loschiavo, 24 Fith Ave., New York, NY 10011-8817.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR sought by Center for New Television in Chicago to be responsible for operational management of programs with emphasis on marketing and public outreach. Requires knowledge of and commitment to independent media. Salary: $27,000. Deadline: June 30. Contact: Joyce Bolinger, executive director,

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Center for New Television, 912 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60605; (312) 427-5446.

## Publications

CIRCLE 8: *Super-8mm/8mm Film/Filmmaker Index, Vol. 1, U.S. & Puerto Rico* edition available from Int'l Center for 8mm Film & Video. Price: $4 + shipping. Contact: Int'l Center for 8mm Film & Video, 10-R Oxford St., Somerville, MA 02143; (617) 666-3372.

B&T'S LITTLE FILM NOTEBOOK: Feb. '89 premiere issue now available from Brodsky & Treadway. Incls comprehensive info on super 8. Contact: B&T, 10-R Oxford St., Somerville, MA 02143.

GRANT GUIDES FOR THE ARTS: Available from The Foundation Ctr. Incls *Grants for Film, Media & Communications*. Price: $40. Contact: The Foundation Ctr., 79 Fifth Ave., Dept. TS, New York, NY 10003; (800) 424-9836.

NEW VISIONS: *Catalog of Independent American Film & Video Artists on Home Video* now available from Facets Video. Contact: Facets Multimedia, 1517 W. Fullerton Ave., Chicago, IL 60614; (312) 281-9075; (800) 331-6197.

THE NEXT STEP: *Distributing Independent Films & Videos* coming this Sept. from The Media Project. Edited by Morrie Warshawski. Provides comprehensive overview of film & video distribution written by experts in the field. Price: $17.95. Contact: Brigette Sarabi, The Media Project, Distribution Handbook, 1341 S.E. Birch St., Portland, OR 97214; (503) 231-9549.

AUDIOCRAFT: *Comprehensive Introduction to the Tools & Techniques of Audio Production*, written by Randy Thom & published by the Nat'l Federation of Community Broadcasters. Price: $22. Contact: NFCB, 1314 14th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20005; (202) 797-8911.

INTEGRATING ELEMENTS: *Creative Approaches to Video & Computer Imagery in Education* now available from Intermedia Arts Minnesota. Illustrated handbook teachers of grades 4-12 incls info on curriculum integration, activities, resources & basic production techniques for video & computer imagery. Edited by Nancy Stalnaker Norwood. Price: $9.95 + $1.50 shipping & handling & sales tax in MN. Contact: Integrating Elements, Intermedia Arts Minnesota, 425 Ontario St., S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 627-4444.

TEXAS FILM STUDIES SERIES: Books covering broad range of topics & issues, from early film history to contemporary cinema. Primary focus on mainstream industry practices & products & on complex interplay of cinema & culture. Edited by Thomas Schatz. To submit manuscripts contact: Frankie Westbrook, sponsoring editor, UT Press, Box 7819, Austin, TX 78713-7819 or Prof. Thomas Schatz, Dept. of Radio, TV & Film, CMA 6.112, UT Austin, Austin, TX 78712.

STRATEGIES: *Quarterly Publication of Strategies for Media Literacy* is dedicated to fostering media educ. in the U.S. Edited by Kathleen Tyner. Contact: SML, Rm. 306, 347 Dolores St., San Francisco, CA 94110.

LIMBO: *Media Art File Magazine* published quarterly by Gendai-Kikaku-Shitsu Publishing, Tokyo, Japan. U.S. price: $25/yr. Contact: Media Art Workshop, c/o Morioka, Yaho 4156, Kunitachi City, Tokyo, Japan 186.


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## Resources • Funds

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES: Humanities Projects in Media deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: James Dougherty, NEH, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20506; (202) 786-0278.

FIVF DONOR-ADVISED Film & Video Fund seeks social issue film & video projects for 1989 grant cycle. Cats incl. peace, communications, environment & social change. Deadline: July 3. For appl. materials send SASE to: Donor-Advised Film & Video Fund, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th Fl., New York, NY 10012.

1989-90 FULBRIGHT GRANT WITH THE UK: Special Fellowship in Film & TV designed for emerging & midcareer professionals, geared toward practitioner rather than the academic. Deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: Steven Blodgett or Michael Doyle, Council for Int'l Exchange of Scholars, 3400 Int'l Dr., NW, Ste. M-500, Washington, DC 20008-3097; (202) 686-6239; fax (202) 362-3442; telex 23-7401891-CIES UC.

1990-91 ADVANCED RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS IN INDIA: The Indo-U.S. Subcommission on Educ. & Culture offers research grants in India for all academic disciplines, except clinical medicine. Applicants must be U.S. citizens at postdoctoral level or equivalent professional level. Scholars & professionals w/ limited or no prior experience in India are esp. encouraged to apply. Appl. deadline: June 15. Contact: Council for Int'l Exchange of Scholars, Attn: Indo-Amer. Fellowship Program, 3400 Int'l Dr., Ste. M-500, Washington, D.C. 20008-3097; (202) 686-4013.

PAUL ROBESON FUND FOR FILM & VIDEO: Supports production & distribution of independent social issue film & video projects. Deadline: June 1. Contact: The Funding Exchange, 666 Broadway, #500, New York, NY 10012.

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE: Grants Program for scholarship, educ., training & public information in int'l peace & conflict mgmt. Appl. deadlines: June 1, Oct. 1, Feb. 1. Contact: United States Institute of Peace, Grants Program, 1550 M St., NW, Ste 700, Washington, D.C. 20005-1708; Tel. (202) 457-1700; fax (202) 429-6063.

MIDATLANTIC ARTS FOUNDATION Visual Arts Residency grants avail. for 1990/91 projects. Supports residencies by indiv. artists & prof. art critics. Deadline: July 14. Contact: MidAtlantic Arts Foundation, 11 E. Chase St., Ste. 2A, Baltimore, MD 21202; (301) 539-6656.

ALASKA STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS Project Grant deadline: Nov. 1. Contact: ASCA, 619 Warehouse Ave., Ste. 220, Anchorage, AK 99501-1682; (907) 279-1558.

INTERMEDIA ARTS MEDIA ARTS PRODUCTION AWARDS of equipment & facilities usage & support to artists working in video, electronic music, computer graphics, animation & performance. Awards based on submitted proposals for creation or production of whole or partial projects. 6 to 10 awards given annually. Appl. deadlines: Aug. 1 & Nov. 1. Individual emerging or professional artists or groups of collaborating artists eligible, w/ no residential requirements. Contact: Intermedia Arts, 425 Ontario St., SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 627-4444.

MEDIA ART INSTALLATIONS: Jerome Foundation will award 3 stipends to create a gallery installation of electronic, media-based, or interdisciplinary art forms. Limited to Minnesota artists. Grants will be given by jury & announced June 30. Exhibits scheduled for Feb. 1990. Appl. deadline: June 2; postmarked before 4 p.m. Contact: Mason Riddle, curator, Intermedia Arts of Minnesota, 425 Ontario St., SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 627-4444.

RHODE ISLAND STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS: Artist Development Grant deadline: Aug. 1 & Dec. 1; Artist Projects, Dec. 1. Contact: RISC, 95 Cedar St., Ste. 103, Providence, RI 02903.

FISCAL SPONSORSHIPS: Offered by Educational Film & Television Ctr., an org. helping independent authors, educators & film/videomakers develop & distribute educ. materials about current health care topics. Fees generally 5-7% of production budget & donation of 20 copies of completed book or program to charitable orgs for nonbroadcast, noncommerical educ. use. Contact: EFTC, Fiscal Sponsorship Program, 210 Fifth Ave., Ste. 1102, New York, NY 10010.

ARTS ARBITRATION & MEDIATION SERVICES: Offered by California Lawyers for the Arts. Fees based on sliding scale, ranging from $15 to $50 per hearing. Contact: CLA, Fort Mason Ctr., Bldg. B, Rm. 300, San Francisco, CA 94123; (415) 776-7715 or 775-7200; or in Los Angeles, (213) 623-8311.

## Trims & Glitches

HEARTY CONGRATS to AIVF members whose work was recognized by the Academy for Motion Picture Arts and Sciences: John Canemaker, who designed and directed the animated sequences for the Best Documentary Short *You Don't Have to Die*, and Dean Parisot, whose *The Appointment of Dennis Jennings* won an Oscar in the Best Live Action Short category.

KUDOS to Karen Goodman of Simon & Goodman Picture Company, whose *Children's Storefront* received Silver Prize at the Leningrad Film Festival.

CONGRATS to Laura Tierney, a Tampa, Florida member who received 3 awards during the Jones Intercable 4th Annual Golden Cassette Video Festival.

SOUTHEAST FILM & VIDEO FELLOWSHIP winners include John Arthos, Jr., *Too Dowap*; Eric Mofford, *Edward On His Day Off*; Joseph Gray, Jr., *Lethal Vapor*; David D. Williams, *Lillian*; & Linda Lewett, *Ledge*. Congratulations to these AIVF members.

KUDOS to AIVF member award winners of the 1989 Dance on Camera Festival. Gold Award Certificate: Claire Iwatsu for *Hiroshima*. Silver Award: Lesley Ann Patten, *Dancemaker*. Honorable Mentions: Michael Blackwood, *Retracing Steps*; Abby Luby, *Paper Dance*; Skip Blumberg, *Dancing Hands*; Dance Films Assn., *The Legacy of the Choreography of Isadora Duncan*; & Steven V. Traingall, *Impulse Dance Company*.

WHO'S WHO among Young American Professionals award, sponsored by National Reference Press, went to AIVF member Edgar Vélez. Congratulations.

# PROGRAM NOTES


## Kathryn Bowser

***Director, FIVF Festival Bureau***


With its recently completed shipment of over 100 cassettes to the Sydney Film Festival for prescreening, FIVF's Festival Bureau is continuing its liaison work with several international film festivals. Prior to Sydney, the Bureau worked with the Films de Femmes International Film Festival of Creteil, which included a special retrospective of films by women of color. Next on the agenda was the Locarno Film Festival, whose director, David Streiff, visited FIVF's office early in May to screen feature films for the Swiss festival, which will be held in August. Sheila Whitaker, the director of the London Film Festival, will prescreen cassettes collected through the bureau and sent to England. We will also make recommendations and arrange for group shipping and insurance.

A number of specialized festivals have contacted the Festival Bureau in the past few months. As global environmental concerns increase, interest in films with fresh perspectives exploring issues such as urbanization, pollution, energy, health topics, conservation, and industrial risks, among other subjects, has peaked. The Festival Bureau is collecting and shipping entries for the Rencontres Internationales de l'Environnement et de la Nature (RIENA) Film Festival in Rochefort-sur-Mer in France, as well as the Parma International Medical and Scientific Film Festival in Italy. We have also been contacted by Ecovision in France, which is interested in films for its market, Ökomedia in West Germany, which will program a day on North American films, and the FIFARC International Film Festival on Architecture, Urbanism and Urban Environment in France, which is interested in films dealing with urban social issues as well as works on architectural themes.

Distribution of the *AIVF Guide to International Film and Video Festivals* is proceeding briskly and is available through AIVF Publications. In addition, arrangements have been made with an educational distributor, which will be contacting national and international lists of educational institutions and scholars. In connection with its national marketing, we have participated in AIVF cosponsored seminars and workshops geared toward film festivals and independents with Film Arts Foundation in San Francisco and the DC Filmfest in Washington.

Publication of the *Guide* is biannual, and a new edition will be published in the fall of 1990. Meanwhile, with the support of a MacArthur Foundation grant, work has begun on the second edition of the *AIVF Guide to Film and Video Distributors*, which will update the 1984 publication.


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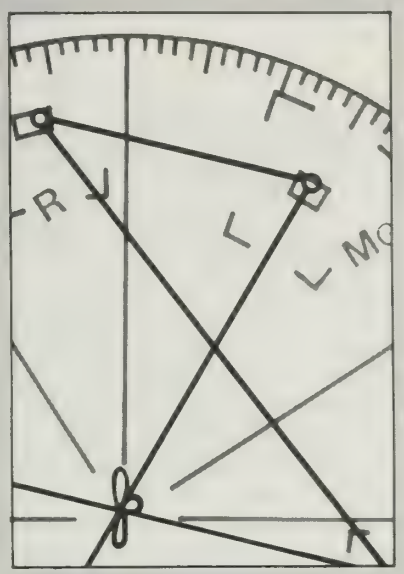
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## SUMMARY OF THE MINUTES OF THE AIVF/FIVF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

At its meeting on March 18, 1989, the AIVF/FIVF board of directors voted to incorporate a temporary editorial advisory board to *The Independent*. The committee will review issues of the magazine from the past two years and make suggestions as representatives of the membership and based on a reader survey conducted by *The Independent* last year. It will also decide whether there is a need for a permanent advisory committee. The committee consists of board members Steve Savage (chair), Robert Aaronson, Skip Blumberg, and Lourdes Portillo, AIVF staff members Lawrence Sapadin and Martha Gever, and *Independent* art director Christopher Holme.

The board also decided to contact proposed candidates for AIVF regional correspondents, who will be responsible for providing membership information, holding meetings, and aiding recruitment in areas of the country outside New York City. The proposed correspondents are Joyce Bolinger of Illinois, Cheryl Chisholm of Georgia, Deanna Morse of Michigan, and Bart Weiss of Texas.

Board members voted to invite two new members to the AIVF/FIVF Advisory Board: Eugene Aleinikoff, an attorney who has worked with AIVF on negotiations with the Screen Actors Guild and the U.S. Copyright Office, and Ed Brown, a former AIVF/FIVF accountant. The current composition of the Advisory Board will be reviewed at the board's next meeting.

Discussion of a new AIVF logo resumed, and the board decided to ask Lawrence Sapadin, Christopher Holme, and Robert Aaronson to work together and present five possible new logos at the next meeting, at which time a final decision will be made.

The next two board meetings are scheduled for June 17 and September 16, 1989. Members are encouraged to attend board meetings and work with committees. Confirm dates in advance. For more information, call AIVF, (212) 473-3400.


### AIVF/FIVF BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

Robert Aaronson, Adrianne Benton, Skip Blumberg (treasurer), Christine Choy, Loni Ding (vice-president), Lisa Frigand,* Dai Sil Kim-Gibson, Wendy Lidell (secretary), Regge Life (chair), Tom Luddy,* Lourdes Portillo, Robert Richter (president), Lawrence Sapadin (ex officio), Steve Savage,* Deborah Shaffer, John Taylor Williams.*

* FIVF Board of Directors only


### FIVF TAPE LIBRARY

The FIVF Festival Bureau has established a tape library of members' current works to expedite screenings for upcoming film and video festivals. Members interested in depositing their work in the library should contact: Kathryn Bowser, Festival Bureau director, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012, (212) 473-3400. 1/2" and 3/4" tapes will be accepted.

## AIVF THANKS...

Daniel Hess, for his contribution to the AIVF Emergency Legislative Fund. Contributions may be sent to: AIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.

## CORRECTIONS

The information concerning the establishment of a fund in memory of Stephen C. Ning, published in the May issue, was incorrect. Contributions toward the support of Dain Ning, Steve's son, should be made out to Yuet Fung Ho and addressed to her at 46 Mulberry St., #2B, New York, NY 10013.

In "From Russia with Love: The International Non-Feature Film Festival in Leningrad" in the May 1989 issue, 14 films by U.S. documentary filmmakers were listed as being included in the festival's information section. These films were selected with the help of the U.S. programmer, Anne Borin. However, there were additional U.S. films that the Soviets had invited directly. These are: *Powaqqatsi*, by Godfrey Reggio; *The Houses Are Full of Smoke*, by Alan Francovich; *With Babies and Banners*, by Lorraine Grey, Lyn Goldfarb, and Anne Bohlen; *Vladimir Horowitz The Last Romantic* and *Horowitz Plays Mozart*, by David and Albert Maysles; plus retrospectives of the work of Leo Hurwitz and Richard Leacock.

In "Window of Opportunity" in the April 1989 issue of *The Independent*, the director of *Cause and Effect* was incorrectly identified. Her name is Susan Delson.

## AIVF REGIONAL CORRESPONDENTS

AIVF has recently instituted a network of regional correspondents, who will provide membership information, hold meetings, and aid recruitment in areas of the country outside New York City. AIVF Members are urged to contact them about AIVF-related needs and problems, about your activities, and other relevant information and news:

**Joyce Bolinger**, executive director
Center for New Television
912 S. Wabash
Chicago, IL 60605
(312) 427-5446

**Cheryl Chisolm**
2844 Engle Road, NW
Atlanta, GA 30318
(404) 792-2167

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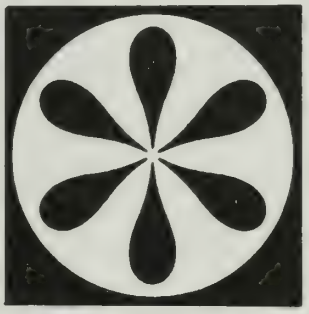
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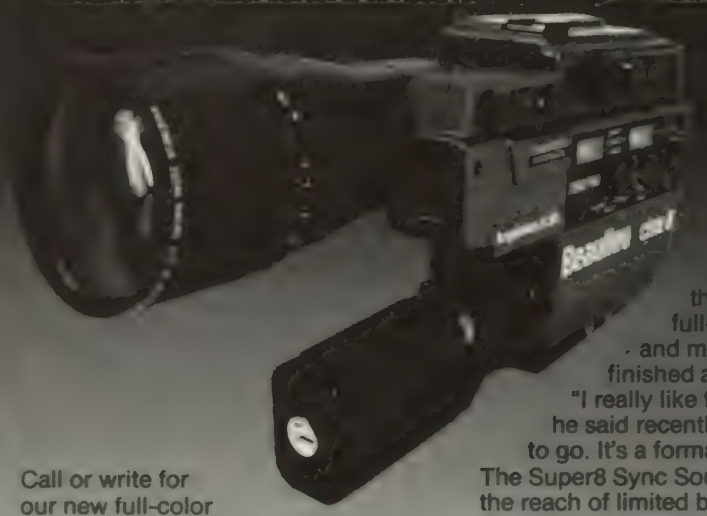
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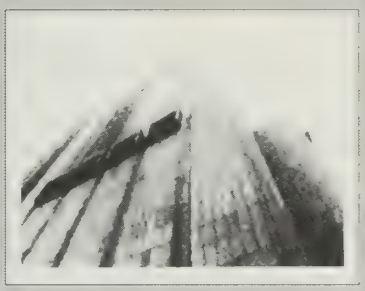
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COVER: In the AIDS educational videotape *Ojos Que No Ven*, Doña Rosa discovers her son on the couch with another man, then confronts her fear of homosexuality by educating herself—and her friends and family—about AIDS. *Ojos Que No Ven* and its accompanying *fotonovela*, produced by the mental health agency El Instituto Familiar de la Raza and the Latino AIDS Project, have received wide distribution around the world. These and other films and videotapes about AIDS by and for people of color are the subject of Catherine Saalfield and Ray Navarro's "Not Just Black and White: AIDS Media and People of Color." Photo by JoAnne Seador, courtesy Instituto Familiar de la Raza.

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**AIVF/FIVF STAFF MEMBERS:** Lawrence Sapadin, executive director; Ethan Young, membership/programming director; Kathryn Bowser, festival bureau director; Morton Marks, audio/business manager; Sol Horwitz, Short Film Showcase project administrator; Mary Jane Skalskin, administrative assistant.

## MAGIC TRICKS

*To the editor*

I have some thoughts about a couple of warnings you might have offered the readers of "The Plugged-In Producer," by Debreh Gilbert, in the April issue of *The Independent*: 1. Beware of copy protection, and 2. make sure you understand the return policy on these specialized programs. It is no accident that many software publishers advertise, in ads and on the packages themselves, that a program is "not copy protected." At least one of the programs you wrote about *is* copy protected, and my own experience with that program was disastrous, in part because of their return policy.

A while back I purchased *Movie Magic* at the suggestion of one of their distributors, Direct Cinema in Los Angeles. Mitchell Block, the head of Direct Cinema, was so excited about the program and so convinced of its abilities that he offered it with an "If for any reason..." money-back guarantee. I also bought one of their optional $100 modules which made my investment quite substantial. I installed the program in my computer and started to wade through the manual. After one or two half-hour sessions, I decided that it probably was worth the effort to learn the program, but an immediately pressing deadline sent me back to *Excel* (a spreadsheet program) for the moment. Subsequently, my computer froze every time I tried to use *Excel* and almost every other time I tried to use any of the programs in *Windows*, which is the program I use to load *Excel*. I was forced to call in an expensive computer consultant and watched as he tried to destroy *Movie Magic*'s copy protection file, byte by byte, which had, somehow, gotten into *Windows*. While we were doing this, he reminded me that he had warned me about copy-protected programs—that they can be unstable.

After spending hundreds of dollars to solve the problem, my computer no longer freezes and I am now rid of *Movie Magic*, sort of. I very carefully packed up the program, along with a letter explaining why I wanted a refund, and sent it back to California. To my surprise, they were completely unwilling to refund my purchase price, claiming that the fact that the program would not work in my computer was not reason enough to issue a refund. The most annoying aspect of this—apart from the loss of the money—was the stonewalling that the company resorted to. If you get on the wrong side of these people, they end up sounding like Con Ed or the phone company. You will hear a lot of phrases like, "It is not our policy to...," or "No one has ever complained about this before." At one point, they argued that they shouldn't refund the money because I was using a "clone" and not a computer actually built by IBM. At another point, they claimed that the fact that I hadn't notified them *immediately* of the problem was reason enough not to issue a refund. (When I explained that the problem did not appear immediately, they were unmoved.) To their credit, Direct Cinema attempted to persuade *Movie Magic*'s publishers to refund the purchase price as part of Direct Cinema's "If for any reason..." guarantee. *Movie Magic* refused, losing one of their distributors in the process. Mitchell Block, of course, now feels a little reluctant to suggest a program that might not work in every computer from a software publisher that refuses to refund the purchase price if it doesn't.

*Movie Magic*'s final answer (not mine) to all this, was to send me another copy of *Movie Magic*, which, they said, I could sell to someone else, as a way of recouping my loss. When I opened the envelope, I discovered that they had configured my name into the packaging, just about making it impossible to sell it to anyone else—assuming that I could, with a straight face, tell someone that I thought they should part with $600 for *Movie Magic*. Know anyone who'd like to buy a copy of *Movie Magic* for half price?

*—Lance Bird*
New York, NY

*Debreh Gilbert replies:*

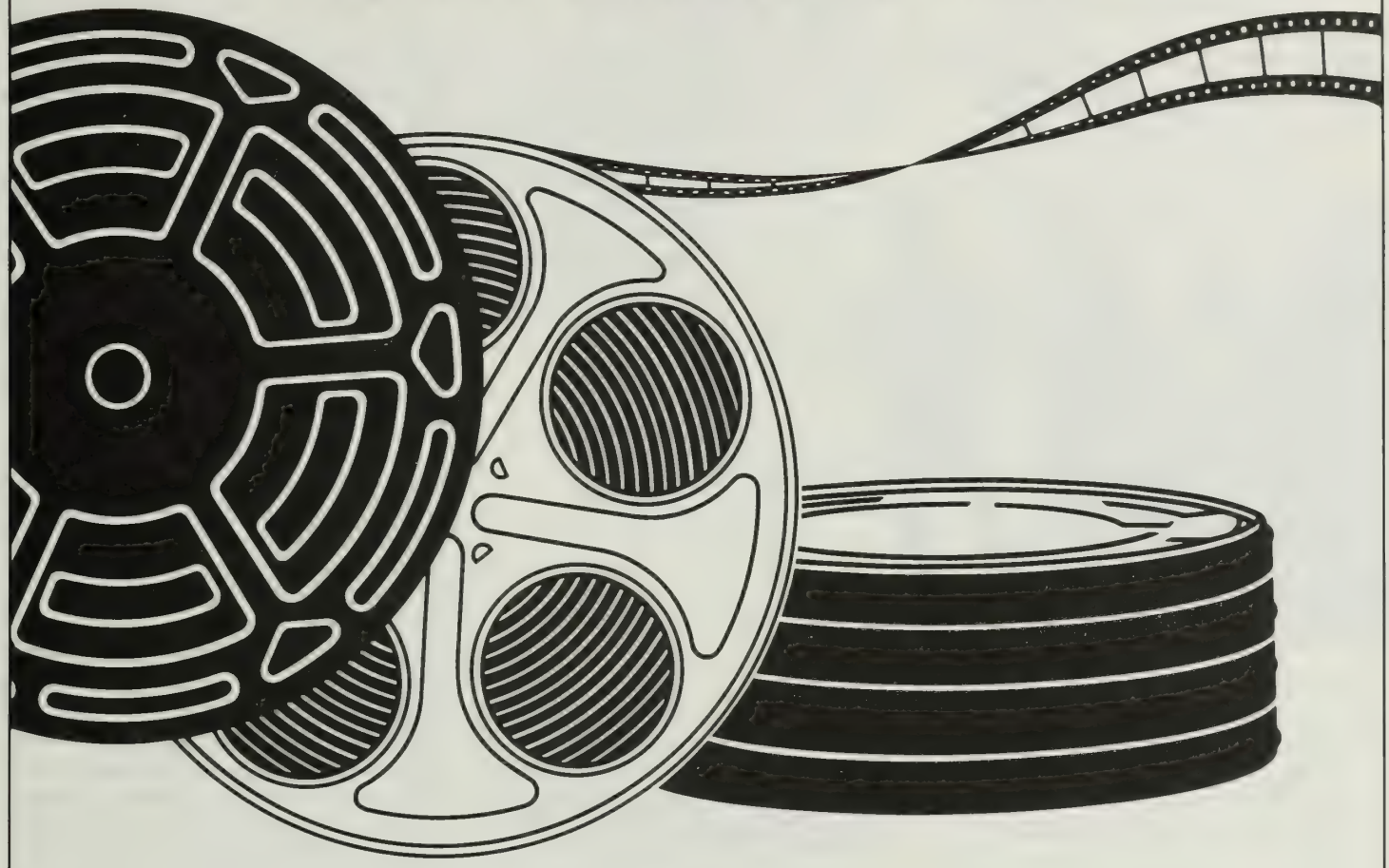
Lance Bird's experience illustrates what Miriam Weinstein at New York City's Better Business Bureau describes as "the world of grey areas" between the manufacturer's warranty and the vendor's guarantee—an area where most dissatisfied customers find themselves. Getting your money back for a product that doesn't work is a reasonable expectation. But, as your parents always said, it's important to read the small print. According to the minimal consumer protection laws in many states, manufacturers must display their warranty on each product. Such guarantees will usually prevail, although stores are required to prominently display their refund and return policies as well. Nevertheless, shoppers must remain alert.

As Bird points out, the age of electronic technology has added new problems to consumers' worries. One doesn't take new software home and screw it in like a light bulb. The profusion of PCs, clones, and daughters of clones makes it increasingly difficult to tell if software is compatible with your equipment before you actually take it home. So neophytes and techies alike need time to try out new programs. Most companies, acknowledging the difficulty of learning and adapting software, offer technical assistance. At the same time, the refund period is limited. In other words, 30 days may seem like plenty of time to try out and return software one can't use, but this may mean that you must begin working with it immediately in order to troubleshoot any potential difficulties.

When difficulties do arise, the vendor may urge the manufacturer to give a refund, as Mitchell Block did with Screenplay Systems. But the manufacturer may choose to refuse the refund. Block explained to me that Direct Cinema is not a software distributor, although they have obtained programs for film/videomakers. However, he stated, "We can't recommend products unless the company stands behind them."

I then spoke with Steve Greenfield, owner of Screenplay Systems, who admitted that he knew about Bird's problems with *Movie Magic*. Although he granted that these were serious, he said, "These are things we had never seen." He added that he would have refunded Bird's money if he had been convinced that the program would not run in Bird's computer—which he was not. (Greenfield suggested that the solution to Bird's problem is replacement of the Rombios—a chip that regulates compatability between computer and software. This is a substantial procedure that requires a computer technician or consultant.) Greenfield also claimed that Bird was the only *Movie Magic* consumer to ask for a refund, and told me, "We don't have a specific warranty; we pretty much never had to." As always, *caveat emptor*.

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# PROMISES, PROMISES: PROGRAMS ON THE PALESTINIAN INTIFADA ACCUSED OF BIAS



**Israeli soldiers stand guard in *Days of Rage: The Young Palestinians.* Executives at New York City public television station WNYC refused to air this documentary on the *intifada* because of its alleged bias and denied that they had ever agree to act as the show's presenting station.**

Courtesy PBS

This spring two independent documentaries presenting sympathetic portrayals of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, *Days of Rage: The Young Palestinians* and *Letter from Palestine*, were refused airtime by some public television stations because of their alleged "bias." The action of these stations once again raises the question of what constitutes balance in broadcasting: whether every documentary and news report on a controversial subject ought to contain a point-for-point rebuttal or whether "balance" should be reflected in stations' overall mix of programming.

In April, Jo Franklin-Trout, producer of *Days of Rage*, cried foul, making headlines with her charge that the Public Broadcasting Service had repeatedly postponed her 90-minute documentary on the *intifada* because of "actual or perceived pressure" from pro-Israeli viewers. *Days of Rage* was originally scheduled for December 1988, rescheduled several times, and finally given a June 5 airdate. But less than a week after this was announced by PBS, the program's presenting station, WNYC in New York City, said that it had no intention of airing the show. While not required, it is common practice to have a presenting station for programs that are potentially controversial. Gail Christian, director of news and special projects at PBS, told the *Los Angeles Times* that no major station or regional network she contacted would agree to carry *Days of Rage* without such a buffer. But, in a letter to the *Village Voice* (May 23, 1989), WNYC president Mary Perot Nichols claimed PBS erred in its announcement and the station "had never said it would sponsor it in the first place." Chloe Aaron, WNYC's new vice president for television, who has final jurisdiction over programming decisions, said the confusion resulted from Jonathan Kwitny's association with the show. Kwitny, a former journalist for the *Wall Street Journal* and host of WNYC's public affairs program *The Kwitny Report*, had been lined up to moderate a panel discussion that would follow the program. (More recently, WNYC axed *The Kwitny Report*.) But, as Kwitny told the public television trade paper *Current* (May 10, 1989) regarding *Days of Rage*, "Everything was going along swimmingly. The program department knew what we were doing, though there was no formal authorization. I didn't know anyone had to sign anything." He added, "The business about confusion or misunderstanding is often used to hide a genuine disagreement."

Aaron declined to broadcast *Days of Rage* under any circumstances, as presenting station or otherwise. The justification she offered is that the program is "one-sided"—an argument ignoring WNYC's planned panel discussion, which was to include an Israeli government spokesperson. As she told the *New York Times* (May 2, 1989), "It makes no mention of how the Jews got to Israel, no mention of the Holocaust, no mention of how the Palestinians treated the Jews nor how Arabs treated the Palestinians. It's a pure propaganda piece that I'd compare to Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will*."

As a result of this statement and WNYC's actions, the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) heard from several of its members who wanted to generate a collective response. AIVF member Amos Vogel, founder of the independent showcase Cinema 16, said, "There's no dearth of pro-Zionist films or reporting on public television; I'd like to know more about what the other side is saying, but apparently, I'm not allowed to because I'm weak and gullible and need protection from myself. I'm glad that someone less gullible has the legal power to keep me from seeing images dangerous to myself. Isn't the protection of the weak one of the main functions of democracy?" In a letter to WNYC's president Nichols, AIVF president Robert Richter stated, "AIVF strongly condemns the censorship by WNYC...and Chloe Aaron's ill-founded comparison of the program with Leni Riefenstahl's pro-Nazi film, *Triumph of the Will*. By linking the programs together, Ms. Aaron implies that Jo Franklin-Trout is sympathetic to Nazism and the destruction of the Jews.... By censoring the program, WNYC violates one of the basic principles of public television—the presentation of diverse points of view on controversial subjects. AIVF hopes that WNYC will allow its viewers the opportunity to judge *Days of Rage* for themselves and that Ms. Aaron will publicly apologize to Jo Franklin-Trout for implying that her work is comparable to Nazi propaganda."

Beyond helping with the panel discussion, Franklin-Trout had already responded to PBS' sensitivity about a program on the whys and wherefores of the *intifada* by making some changes at the suggestion of Barry Chase, head of PBS's News and Public Affairs Programming, after he viewed the rough cut. These amounted to a general "softening" of the piece, according to Franklin-Trout, and the addition of comments by the number two man at the Israeli Embassy, who verified that certain repressive actions covered in the film—curfews, arrest and detention without trial of the president of Hebron University, bulldozing of a Palestinian's house—represented official policy. Franklin-Trout drew the line, however, when PBS officials wanted still more of the Israeli's rebuttals. "This is a documentary; it isn't a debate or a ping pong match," she said in a phone interview from her Washington, D.C., of-

fice. "This program explores the question, why does the uprising continue, and who and what is the group all about who fuels it? It's an obvious journalistic question that everyone but PBS is asking." In Franklin-Trout's view, the *intifada* is too hot a potato for PBS to handle for two reasons: "One, it fears audience reaction, and two, PBS is [indirectly] dependent on funding from Congress. It is the part of government that has had the most difficulty dealing with this issue, because of their own funding—and this is how the circle goes."

Once WNYC abdicated its role as presenter, WNET-New York agreed to take over. WNET said it would present *Days of Rage* if the airdate could again be pushed back in order to give the station time to prepare its own introduction and panel. While three to four weeks would have sufficed for this purpose, says Richard Hutton, director of Public Affairs Programming at WNET, PBS reset the airdate for September 6 to assure *Days of Rage* a larger audience than a mid-summer showing would attract. But for Franklin-Trout, timeliness is the first priority, and whether or not the *intifada* will still be in the headlines this fall is a gamble she doesn't like taking.

In a similar controversy this spring over a documentary's "bias" towards Palestinians, two stations refused to air *Letter from Palestine*, a half-hour documentary produced by Steve York for WGBH. Shot with a two-pound home video camera, this "video letter" follows several Palestinian doctors as they travel in the West Bank and Gaza, visiting towns that have not seen a doctor in over a month. York, who considers himself a filmmaker more than a journalist, does not challenge the stories he is told by the villagers about mistreatment by the occupying army. Nor does he find a surrogate to do so. Rather, *Letter from Palestine* is clearly a first-person account of the sights and sounds encountered by the producer and doctors on the front lines of the occupied territory.

More than three months lapsed between York's delivery of *Letter from Palestine* to PBS and setting an airdate. "You never know how much of this is the usual bureaucracy and how much is foot-dragging," says York. A national satellite feed was finally set for April 2. Some stations aired it simultaneously with the feed; others did so later. A few paired it with programs like *Diary of a Refusenik*, according to York. But as of six weeks after the national feed, Philadelphia, Detroit, Dallas, Atlanta, Baltimore, Hartford, and Kansas City are among public television stations in the top 30 markets that have not yet scheduled *Letter from Palestine*. WBIZ in Cleveland and WPBT in Miami turned it down because of the "bias issue," as stated in PBS's carriage report. WBIZ's general manager, Betty Cope, told *The Independent* that although *Days of Rage* presented "an interesting use of technology," an aspect played up in WGBH's promotional materials, "it was too subjective."

Both *Days of Rage* and *Letter from Palestine* ultimately got the kind of publicity that PBS


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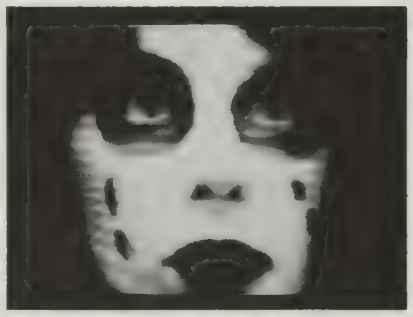
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hadn't bargained for. *Los Angeles Times* critic Harold Rosenberg, whose column is sydicated in over 200 newspapers, chided PBS for shrinking from controversial programming. "*Letter From Palestine* is neither shrill nor covertly propagandist. It is propaganda only if propaganda means showing that Palestinians are human," he wrote in his column on March 31. In this and an April 22 article on *Days of Rage*, Rosenberg challenged the model of stop-watch balance, a point echoed by syndicated columnist Anthony Lewis in a *New York Times* op-ed column on May 11. Although Lewis, who says he knows Chloe Aaron, doesn't believe she would yield to audience pressure, he nevertheless takes her to task for her "dangerous" notion of balance. "This incident shows how the delusive search for 'balance' on television leads to self-censorship. The fear of real freedom—the freedom to express a strong point of view—has drained a powerful medium of much of its informing potential."

PATRICIA THOMSON

## BOMB THREAT IGNITES CENSORSHIP DISPUTE

A spring offensive of sorts was launched in the press last April, with accusations volleying back and forth between the American Film Institute (AFI) and independent writer-director Cyrus Nowrasteh. The controversy centers on the aborted world premiere of Nowrasteh's first feature, *Veiled Threat*, originally slated for the 1989 AFI/L.A. FilmFest that month.

*Veiled Threat* is described by its Los Angeles-based director as a thriller with a political backdrop, which is about a private detective "who becomes immersed in the Los Angeles milieu of Iranian exiles." Among others, one character is portrayed as a villanous clergyman who scams fellow Iranians, making the timing of the movie's completion ominous—fast of the heels of the controversy over Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*. AFI charges that the film's producers, Day Star Productions, exploited that coincidence for publicity purposes.

*Veiled Threat* was first invited to the small-budget United States independents section of AFI's festival in February of this year. However, its March 8 press screening was disrupted by a bomb threat called into the AFI switchboard, which was reported by attending critics and launched a mini media storm when the producers disclosed previous telephone death threats. The press screening was temporarily disrupted, but the premiere itself was ultimately dropped from the festival schedule.

Nowrasteh and AFI continue to be at odds over the cause of the cancellation. According to AFI, it shifted the screening location to the AFI campus when Cineplex Odeon, the owner of the theater housing the festival, insisted on a payment of $20,000 per week for armed and undercover security. AFI claims the screening at its own facilities was dropped altogether only after the producers reneged on a promise to discontinue releasing stories about threats to the film. It also alleges that Day Star, through a hired press agent, states in a press release that AFI had failed to schedule the film because of the threats.

Nowrasteh contends that AFI actually had no intention of scheduling *Veiled Threat* after the March 8 press screening and did not list the film in the festival catalogue published that same month. In an op-ed piece in the *New York Times* (April 24, 1989), he charged the AFI with censorship and bowing to intimidation. Nowrasteh also denies AFI's contention of press exploitation, saying the producers hired a press agent on April 3 after being notified that the movie would not be screened in the festival.

The controversy itself may outlive the movie. At this writing the matter is still a subject of scrutiny in the press, but prospects for distribution of *Veiled Threat* remain precarious. According to Nowrasteh, there are no plans for domestic release and it's still being shopped around to distributors. Following the bomb threat publicity, several European distributors backed out of their deals with Day Star. Ironically, at an unrelated event on April 27, the last night of the festival, Nowrasteh was awarded the Orson Welles Freedom of Expression Award for *Veiled Threat*, voted by directors from around the world.

RENEE TAJIMA

## A CZAR FOR ALL SEASONS: PTV CONTEMPLATES REORGANIZATION

At their recent annual convention, public television stations endorsed a plan that would dramatically change the way their national programming is funded. The plan, overwhelmingly approved at the April meeting of the National Association of Public Television Stations (NATPS) in San Diego, would pass all national program monies straight through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB)—effectively gutting it—to a centralized decision-making entity at the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). This office would be headed by a new chief programming executive (CPE), colloquially dubbed the "program czar." In the current system, CPB sends 75 percent of federal allocations to stations as Community Service Grants but retains 25 percent for national programming and related expenses. Most of these national programming dollars are administered by CPB's Program Fund, which decides which national programs will receive support. PBS then distributes many of these shows by satellite to local public television stations, which have the choice of broadcasting them or not. The new plan would centralize both funding and distribution decision-making regarding national programs within PBS.

This is not the first time the idea of rechanneling program funds directly to PBS has been

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floated. The new plan is actually a variation on an earlier controversial proposal made at the time of public television's Congressional reauthorization hearings in 1988. At that time, the Senate Subcommittee on Communications backed an amendment to the Public Telecommunications Act of 1988 that would have sent 80 percent of national program funds directly to local public television stations rather than to CPB's Program Fund. The Senate bill died in negotiations with the parallel House committee. However, the Senate concern over national programming policy survived in the form of a requirement, included in the 1988 Act, that CPB conduct a study of the best method for funding national programming in consultation with PBS and public television representatives. CPB's recommendations will be put into effect during its next fiscal year unless Congress takes specific actions to oppose CPB's plan. "Our goal," states the Senate report that accompanied the new law, "is both to increase the quantity of new programming underwritten by Federal funds, and decrease opportunities for political interference by the CPB board," which consists of presidential appointees. CPB's report is due January 31, 1990. Since CPB has not yet offered any plan of its own, NAPTS effectively seized the offensive with its proposal.

It also placed CPB and independent producers in an odd alliance, as this centralization of programming funds could adversely affect the number and nature of independent productions receiving federal support. The National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers has gone on record opposing the plan. In testimony to a House appropriations subcommittee with jurisdiction over CPB, the Coalition states that, instead of seeking new ways to serve the unserved audiences, "It appears that for many public broadcasters, the central challenge of public television is to keep its programming away from cable television. However, pursuing that course is folly. First, public television *cannot* compete with commercial programmers. Second, public broadcasting *should not* compete with commerical programmers."

The NAPTS's program czar plan is one of three proposals laid out in *Options for Improving National Program Funding*, a March 31, 1989, report drawn up by a special NAPTS task force for consideration at their annual convention. Of the program czar plan—the option favored by 10 out of 11 small groups of station managers and presidents at the convention—the report explains, "The central objective of this plan is to delegate to one person greater discretion and authority over funding and scheduling of programs for the national program service." It says that the idea behind the centralization of decision-making is to add a competitive edge to current PTV programming. In a February 22, 1989, letter to all PBS member stations on the design criteria for a national program service, PBS president Bruce Chistensen and senior vice president of program support and development Peter Downey spelled out a key incentive: "For the first time, [public television] is beginning to face significiant competition as provide of the sole 'alternative' to commercial broadcast television. New inexpensive distribution technologies, especially cable, are circumventing the barrier of spectrum scarcity and making the distribution of narrow-appeal 'alternative' programming a profitable, competitive business. Formerly unique public television program services are now being replicated by for-profit cable services, and public television is being forced to compete with these services for talent and new programming."

The CPE would be hired by the PBS president and a newly created national program committee. This governing body would consist of "four station representatives elected by the stations..., two minority producers elected by their peers..., two representatives from the major production centers..., two independent producers, elected by their peers," plus one senior CPB program executive and the PBS president. Convened at the offices of PBS, the national program committee would "establish broad programming goals" working closely with the CPE, but would serve only as a policy setting, oversight body. "The CPE would have full and independent authority to make all necessary and timely funding and program acceptance decisions, subject only to the reasonable and necessary guidelines and requirements the committee and the president may establish," says the report. All three of the NAPTS options calls for the elimination of the legal requirement that panels be used in decisions about the funding of program proposals. The report also argues that moving federal money to PBS would reduce the vulnerability of programming decisions to political pressure, avoiding CPB's structure of a presidentially appointed board of directors.

If this plan goes into effect, CPB would turn over the $45-million in its budget allocated for national programming to PBS. Included in this is the $6-million which the 1988 Public Telecommunications Act designated for the Independent Program Service, as well as the $3-million for the minority consortia. These "would continue to operate independently, but their grants would be administered by PBS," says the options paper.

Supporters of independents' interests fear that last April's endorsement, though still under discussion, could eventually spell trouble. "This issue of reorganizing public television's [national programming funds] is important because it goes to the heart of what public television is all about," explains Lawrence Sapadin, president of the Coalition and executive director of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers. "Placing all national programming monies in one program executive's hands, without a panel process, is dangerous. It runs contrary to all previous efforts to diversity federal funding," he continues. Moreover, he states, by centralizing decision-making to improve competition with cable TV, PBS is straying from public broadcasting's origi-


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nal mandate to provide noncommercial, diverse, and innovative programming. In the House testimony, the Coalition reasoned, "Public broadcasting should applaud, not impede, cable programmers' ability to provide programming previously provided by public television... This frees [public television] to seek new ways to serve the unserved and underserved audiences with programming still not available from commercial outlets."

CPB has not yet spoken out against the NAPTS plan, indicating that they are still listening and need to raise more questions. But they do appear somewhat skeptical that such a reorganization would fly in Congress. "In allocating funds, Congress must have an answerable [federal] agency," which member-supported PBS stations are not, explains Mary Maguire, CPB's director of external communications. Maguire also believes that the chief programming executive model is "set up to fail" because it is adopting a commercial TV model without commercial TV program spending levels.

In preparing its own report for Congress, says Maguire, CPB will hear out the NAPTS proposals, as well as conduct its own study of the economics of funding. As of May 1989, CPB has polled 78 producers, underwriters, and programmers on how to improve national program funding.

If Congress does not reject CPB's suggestions next January, they will automatically become law. It is up to independents, therefore, to offer alternative models to the NAPTS proposal that can be incorporated into the CPB study.

QUYNH THAI

## MACARTHUR FUNDS STUDY OF PUBLIC TV REFORM

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation has awarded $25,000 to the Foundation for Independent Video and Film to coordinate efforts by the independent producer community in the planning of the new Independent Production Service (IPS), recently authorized by Congress. The grant will also support research and policy development on the reorganization of the public broadcasting system.

These new funds will support regional independent producer meetings to discuss the programming philosophy and approach of the new service. Planners will solicit "white papers" from the field on programming and policy. The funds will also support producer meetings with public broadcasting entities—including regional organizations such as the Eastern Educational Network and the Central Educational Network—to articulate the vision of the new service to public broadcasters, listen to station programmers' ideas and concerns, and begin to develop strategies for carriage of the work that the IPS will fund.

The MacArthur grant will also support independent producer research and analysis of the reorganization of the public broadcasting system. Under last year's public broadcasting legislation, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting will make recommendations to Congress by January 31, 1990, on the future handling of national program funds. Meanwhile, a public TV station lobbying group, the National Association of Public Television Stations (NAPTS), has advanced its own recommendations for the reorganization of all national program funds under a new "program czar." The MacArthur Foundation grant will enable producers to respond to these inititatives and to develop new approaches to public broadcasting funding policy. Producer representatives have linked the issue of the successful planning of the IPS to the broader developments within public broadcasting. "The MacArthur grant will help the independent producer community shape policy for the IPS and assure that there is a healthy, diverse public broadcasting environment in which the IPS can succeed in its mission of bringing new, innovative television programming to the American public," said Lawrence Sapadin, FIVF executive director and president of the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers.

## FILMING FILM HISTORY

Make a film about film? The Center for Visual History, a nonprofit film production company and archive in New York City, is doing just that. Lawrence Pitkethly, cofounder of the center, is currently developing a 13-part series in association with public television station KCET-Los Angeles with the working title *American Cinema Project*. Pitkethly and the center are no strangers to massive projects, having produced the acclaimed 13-part series on American poets, *Voices & Visions*, which aired on public television in 1988.

Pitkethly, a journalist and filmmaker, and Anson Rabinbach, a historian and professor at Cooper Union, formed the Center for Visual History in 1978. It houses a permanent archive of filmed interviews with more than 75 major American writers, poets, and critics. For the past 10 years the organization has been producing films for public television and theatrical release, including such works as *New York between the Wars* and *New Deal for Artists*.

Recently, the center secured a $350,000 Challenge Fund grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the Public Broadcasting Service to develop a pilot program for *American Cinema Project*. Series funding is also coming from National Endowment for the Humanities and the Annenburg Foundation. "We will be approaching film as probably the most important art form of the twentieth century," says Sasha Alpert, who will produce the pilot and several other programs in the series. "It is much more conceptual and experimental than other [PBS] programs that deal with film." The series will go well beyond the formal terrain of film genres, grounding its review of film's development in social and economic history, under the guidance of senior advisor Jeanine Basinger, curator of the Wesleyan University Film Archives. Says Alpert, "We will be looking at everything that has shaped the movies, from technique to economics." In successive programs the series will analyze how particular social eras shaped the movies and compare product from the studio system of the 1940s and fifties to present-day Hollywood films, as well as Hollywood and independent cinema.

The pilot program on *film noir* will be a combination of film clips, interviews with current directors such as Paul Schrader who were heavily influenced by the genre, art directors, cinematographers like John Daily who will demonstrate *film noir* lighting, and additional footage shot for the series that "will be evocative of *film noir*." Alpert describes their approach as "experimental" and says their manner of combining interviews and film clips will take "a more artistic way than normal." Alpert says shooting for the pilot will begin in June, with a rough cut ready by the end of September. The center anticipates that the series will air on PBS in 1992.

LORNA JOHNSON

## ARTS INFORMATION LIBRARY TO REOPEN

When the Center for Arts Information closed its doors in June 1988 due to financial difficulties, the arts community lost a valuable resource. Subsequently other arts service agencies began noticing a marked increase in the demand for information services regarding grants, job listings, arts management questions, media arts resources—just the kind of information the center had provided. Now, thanks to the nonprofit umbrella organization American Council for the Arts (ACA), the center's library is scheduled to reopen this summer.

The library's new site will be in the midtown Manhattan office of the ACA, located at 1285 Avenue of the Americas. The Center for Arts Information's library will be merged with those of the ACA and the Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts, creating a vast clearinghouse of information for arts professionals. Funding to revive the library was secured by the ACA from the Andrew Mellon Foundation, the Reed Foundation, and the New York Community Trust. Although an exact date has not been set, ACA executive director Sarah Haven says it should reopen sometime in the summer. The ACA is currently making a survey of the needs of the arts community to determine what additional information should be housed in the library.

For further information, contact: American Council for the Arts, 1285 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019; (212) 245-4510.

LJ

# JAIME BARRIOS: 1945-1989

Jaime Eduardo Barrios Pérez, filmmaker and human rights activist, who died on April 18, 1989, at age 43, was a guiding voice, friend, and collaborator to me since my first job 18 years ago at Young Filmmakers up through the present, when we were in the midst of several new projects. Jaime was a person whose passions and beliefs were so intense, who struggled to understand and come to terms with complicated ideas about evolving patterns of international relations, economic and social justice, and how cultural expression is related to social change. It takes many years of work, experimentation, and personal maturity to gain one's full expressive capacity. What is so frustrating about Jaime's death is that he was on the verge of having this kind of control.

Five years after emigrating to New York City from Chile in 1963, Jaime Barrios, Rodger Larson, and Lynn Hofer founded Young Filmmakers (now Film/Video Arts), a nonprofit teaching and low-cost equipment loan facility. Jaime worked there for eight years as director of projects. For him, as for many of us who worked at Young Filmmakers, this was a time of intense emotional highs coming up against some sobering truths. Jaime's students were mostly poor young men from the streets of the Lower East Side. Inside Young Filmmakers Jaime was able to help them find their creative voices, but outside they continually faced the destructive forces of the neighborhood—the poverty and the drugs. What characterized Jaime was his unwilliness to give up and his quickness to support new approaches. When he felt the frustration of some of his talented students as they were losing the fight against drugs, Jaime expanded the teaching workshops into a newsreel unit focusing on local community issues and then helped find an outlet for this material on the local public television station, Channel 13. Some of these students went on to become professional cameramen. When filmmaker Sheila Paige pointed out that there were no women making movies at Young Filmmakers, he hired her to develop a program tailored to young women and later young girls. When I wanted to try to link teaching reading with teaching filmmaking, he gave me all the room I needed to take my super 8 film workshop in a new direction.

The 1973 coup which overthrew Chilean president Salvadore Allende changed Jaime's life, along with millions of others lives. He saw himself connected to many new groups of people and his life took a new course. He immediately helped organize a benefit concert with Phil Ochs and Bob Dylan to raise money for the Chilean churches. Jaime set aside his film work for a number of years and devoted himself to political and human rights activities as a representative of the Chilean government in exile. After this period, Jaime returned to filmmaking in 1980 with *Missing Persons*, a documentary about disappeared political prison-

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Bill Gunn, as he appeared on the cover of his second novel, *Rhinestone Sharecropping* (1981).

Courtesy Gundars Strads

ers. Although unable to return to Chile until two years ago, Jaime was able to produce a series of film reports on conditions in that country in collaboration with Chilean filmmaker Gaston Acnhelovicci using camera teams with foreign news credentials. This culminated in 1986 with *Memoirs of an Everyday War*. His other films include *El Blocke* (1972), *Videocronica* (1982), *In the Footsteps of Columbus* (1987), *The New Crusaders* (1989), and an unfinished film on the poet Pablo Neruda.

SUSAN ZEIG

*Susan Zeig is a filmmaker who lives in New York City.*

## HOWARD BROOKNER: 1954-1989

Independent filmmaker Howard Brookner died in Manhattan of AIDS-related complications on April 27, 1989. He was 34. Brookner was best known for his documentary portrait of writer William Burroughs, a project he began while attending the New York University Film School. *Burroughs* received wide theatrical distribution and was presented at numerous international film festivals, as well as the 1984 New York Film Festival. Following *Burroughs* Brookner produced *Robert Wilson and The Civil Wars*, a documentary feature on the making of Wilson's postmodern opera with a score by David Byrne and Philip Glass. Both films were broadcast on the Public Broadcasting Service.

"He had his heart set on making a feature narrative," said James Grauerholz, secretary to Burroughs and a long-time friend of Brookner's. The filmmaker was well on his way toward meeting this goal with *Bloodhounds of Broadway*, which he wrote, directed, and produced for Columbia Pictures. Based on four stories by Damon Runyon, *Bloodhounds of Broadway* has a cast that includes Madonna, Matt Dillon, Jennifer Grey, Randy Quaid, and Rutger Hauer. Shortly before his death, however, Columbia recut the film and sold it to Vestron for home video distribution only. According to Grauerholz, Brookner hoped to pressure Vestron into restoring his original version, but to no avail. "Howard had two aims," Grauerholz remarked. "He wanted no voiceover or explanation in his films, except the voices and images of his subjects, and he worked to keep himself out of the film. He was interested in observation and the illusion of objectivity and, for that matter, of subjectivity." Poet John Giorno, whose Giorno Poetry Systems distributes *Burroughs*, called Brookner's death "another catastrophe of the AIDS epidemic."

ETHAN YOUNG

## BILL GUNN: 1929-1989

Bill Gunn, a pioneer Black independent film director, scenarist, author, and playwright, died of encephalitis on April 5, 1989, the day before his play *The Forbidden City* opened at the Public Theater in New York City. He was 59 years old. Joseph Papp, who directed *The Forbidden City*, told the *New York Times* that Gunn was "one of the great black writers who understood the kind of psychological relationship of blacks and whites in an emotional way."

A native of Philadelphia, Gunn began his career in the 1950s as a stage actor, making his Broadway debut in *The Immoralist* with James Dean. His entree into the world of film and television came in the 1960s with roles in the popular TV series *Dr. Kildare*, *The Fugitive*, *The Outer Limits*, and *Look Up and Live*. He made his film debut in Martin Ritt's *The Sound and the Fury* and appeared in *The Interns* and *The Spy with My Face*.

A prolific writer of the stage and screen, Gunn's career hit a high point in 1970 when director Hal Ashby hired him to write the screenplay for *The Landlord*. Though underrated, Gunn's first "crossover" film, a corrosively keen comedy-satire depicting black-white relations in the late 1960s, clearly established his talent as a screenwriter. Subsequent screenplays include *Fame Game*, *Friends*, *The Angel Levine*, *Don't the Moon Look Lonesome*, *The Greatest: The Muhammed Ali Story*, *Territory*, *Men of Bronze*, and *The Last Cruise of the Spitfire*.

In the early 1970s when Black independent filmmakers such as Gordon Parks, Sr., Melvin Van Peebles, and Hugh Robertson were gaining access to a film industry heretofore prohibited to Blacks, Gunn made his Hollywood directorial debut in 1970 with *Stop*. Shot on location in Puerto Rico, Gunn's lurid sex-death thriller of a writer who commits suicide after killing his wife was a pioneer Black-Hispanic coproduction. After *Stop*'s aborted release, Gunn began writing, directing, and producing his own films. *Ganja and Hess* (1973), Gunn's first independent feature, in which he starred, was a tour-de-force. Ostensibly based upon the movie *The Vampires of Harlem*, it was initially branded as "blaxploitation" in the U.S., only to later be heralded at the Cannes Film Festival as "cinematic art." Film critic James Monaco ranked it as "one of the ten best films of the decade." Gunn also directed *Personal Problems*, the Black video soap opera by author-filmmaker Ishmael Reed, and collaborated with the late Black independent Kathleen Collins on *Losing Ground* and *Women, Sisters, and Friends*.

*The Forbidden City* is one of the more than 29 dramatic scripts written during the course of his prodigious career as a playwright. Gunn received an Emmy Award in 1972 for his NBC teleplay *Johnnas* and netted an Audelco Award for Best Play of the Year in 1975 for *Black Picture Show*. His plays include *The Celebration*, *Rhinestone*

*Sharecropping*, *Renaissance*, and *Family Employment*.

An aspiring playwright-novelist, Gunn penned two novels, *All the Rest Have Died*, and *Rhinestone Sharecropping*, later made into a play during his lifetime. Gunn left all of his manuscripts to the New York Shakespeare Festival.

JOHN WILLIAMS

*John Williams, a scholar of independent filmmaking, is a contributor to* A Critique of America, Discourse, *and other publications.*

## SEQUELS

When Europe's internal trade barriers fall in 1992, it will become the world's largest economic power. A unified Europe also represents a vast potential market for the U.S. film, television, and advertising industries. However, the 12-member European Community and 22-member Council of Europe are taking measures to shield themselves from an onslaught of non-European programming [see "European Broadcasting: New Rules, Old Game," March 1989]. But it now appears than their protective measures are far less stringent than originally conceived. The most controversial part of the **EC's broadcasting directive** (with which the Council of Europe's guidelines now agree in wording and content) has to do with program quotas. Rather than specify a minimum percent, the directive merely requires that countries should ensure "a majority proportion" for European-originated productions "where practicable"—a slipperly phrase and inevitable loophole. After the directive was made public, a group of European producers protested the weakening of quotas, calling it a "hole in the television ozone."

For producers in this country, however, these guidelines are too harsh. Ted Turner and Motion Picture Asociation of America president Jack Valenti are among the industry heavies now massing their considerable forces to persuade the U.S. government to express dissatisfaction with the European quotas. While the Bush Administration has been characteristically slow in appointing someone responsible for keeping track of and influencing European telecommunications policies, the U.S. Trade Representative's office has pulled together a task force and subsidiary working groups are being established. Meanwhile, some U.S. program producers are taking their own protective measures—by buying European production companies.

□ □ □

As a part of the Soviet Union's restructuring, **Sovinfilm**, the agency that handled foreign coproductions and services, has closed. A new company, Soyuzkinoservice (Film Service Company), will take care of service agreements with foreigners wishing to film in the USSR, and Sovexportfilm with negotiate coproduction deals.

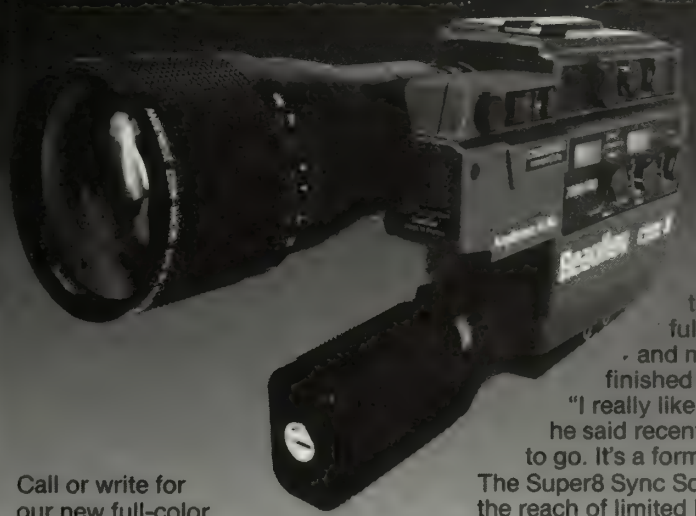
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The Acquisitions and Coproductions Department at **WNET/Channel 13** in New York City is doing some restructuring as well. The new associate director of Program Acquisitions is Andrea Traubner. She will continue her responsibilities acquiring all feature films and programming *Film on Film*, *The Musicals*, and *Channel Crossings*, and will be involved in future planning. Department director Marion Lear Swaybill is expanding the scope of her coproduction activities, and Midge Woolsey is the new department manager.

□ □ □

A group of seven independent filmmakers and the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers have been entangled in a legal battle with the **United States Information Agency** since 1985 over whether their documentaries critical of government policy should be labelled "propaganda" and thus denied the duty-free export which is enjoyed by films having an educational status ["Sequels," October 1988, and "Border Guards," March 1986]. In its latest move, the USIA said that it will not ask the Supreme Court to review a lower court's ruling that found the agency's regulations unconstitutional. However, it still plans to pursue its challenge to a federal court ruling that found its interim export guidelines to be unconstitutional.


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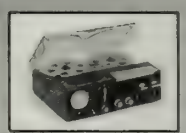
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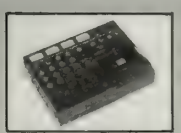
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# CIVIC PRIDE: THE LOS ANGELES ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS



**Los Angeles' new Percent-for-Arts program will raise millions of dollars annually for artists and arts organizations. But to what degree the media arts will benefit—such as the video exhibition program at the Museum of Contemporary Art, here exhibiting Arata Isozaki and Eiko Ishioka's installation *Tokyo: Form & Spirit*—remains to be seen.**

Photo Squidds and Nurns, courtesy Museum of Contemporary Art

Janice Drickey

Monday night. In a run-down section of central Los Angeles, inside a decaying theater where traces of past elegance can be glimpsed beneath peeling paint, the evening's religious services are turned over to a small, earnest man who talks about the importance of art for the Black community. Tuesday night. In another part of the city, artists crowd shoulder-to-shoulder into the Gallery Theatre in Barnsdall Park to hear what this man has to say. Thursday. In an auditorium near the campus of the University of Southern California, 600 Black artists and arts administrators shout questions at him. Friday. Artists living on Skid Row gather in the office of the Homeless Outreach Program to listen and to talk with this man. Another Monday, Latino artists. Tuesday, Arab-Americans. The night after that, disabled artists. Performance artists. Media artists. Night after night, the message is the same, and the response, by turns, excited, hopeful, and hungry. The tireless speaker is 39-year-old Adolfo V. (Al) Nodal, the new general manager of the city's Department of Cultural Affairs, and his message concerns Percent-for-Arts, the umbrella term given four landmark ordinances created to fund arts and cultural opportunities in Los Angeles.

On November 22, 1988, the Los Angeles City Council approved by a vote of 12 to one a plan to create three new funding sources for the arts. The plan would enact a permanent ordinance requiring payment of a one percent fee on all nonresidential private development projects over $500,000. These funds would provide the largest source for a newly-created Los Angeles Endowment for the Arts, with other monies coming from a one percent allotment of expenditures for city public works capital improvement projects, combined with one percent of the city's General Fund, which, in turn, will be based on one percent of the hotel bed tax. The public one percent and the bed tax are already on the books, while the tax on the private sector is an interim ordinance pending a legal study. "The One-Percent," as it is known around city offices, could generate up to $25-million per year to support arts education programs, create performance and studio spaces, commission performing and visual artworks, and provide grants to individual artists and arts organizations.

Nodal, a former artist with a Master's degree in contemporary art from San Francisco State University, recalled the remarkably brief history of the legislation. "[City Councilman Joel Wachs] actually came up with the idea—back in 1984—of establishing a Los Angeles Endowment for the Arts. At the same time that he was doing that, there was a lot of pressure in the city, by members of the community in general, to try to upgrade the [Cultural Affairs] Department. So, to that end, the Mayor established a Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Arts that was formed in 1986." Nodal was part of that Task Force, which spent two years assessing the state of the arts in Los Angeles and surveying arts programs in cities throughout the United States. Their findings, presented in a report to the City Council in 1988, concluded with a recommendation for a comprehensive financial and policy proposal to enhance the city's support of the arts. That recommendation, underscored by the concerted lobbying efforts of arts activists citywide, led City Council members to approve a Percent-for-Arts program to be administered by the Department of Cultural Affairs.

The nightly "town meetings," which Nodal says will continue through the fall, are part of a formal needs assessment process. After hearing about the Percent-for-Arts program, the diverse groups that Nodal addresses are those that approach the Cultural Affairs Department and ask to participate. They also make up an Arts Congress, which Nodal described as having a "big role in letting us know what the issues are." A 100-person Arts Advisory Committee ("a Senate of the Congress," Nodal called it) is also being chosen by the Cultural Affairs Department to represent "all the issues across the board in the city, from the handicapped to opera," Nodal said, adding that the Arts Advisory Committee will play a direct role in forging a plan for the Percent-for-Arts program. According to Nodal, the Endowment will "more than likely" include upgrading the city's grants program to $6-million a year (from $1-million in 1988-89).

Who is entitled to how much will be decided by a peer-panel process, although criteria for the awards has not yet been determined. One thing that is certain, Nodal was quick to add, is that the media arts will be one of the constituencies in the running for funding. "The thing is thoroughly multi-disciplinary. Everything, every discipline will be supported," Nodal said, then chuckled wryly as he added, "and probably then some." When it came to the specifics of funding for independent video and film, Nodal was less certain. "I'm not sure how we're going to structure the funding for film, but we could possibly do it in stages," Nodal said, thinking out loud. "Films go through various stages, so we can fund one stage at a time or something like that." Nodal warmed to the subject. "And then they're multi-year projects sometimes, so we need to fund it in discrete elements that can be completed one year at a time," he said.

Media artists' groups in Los Angeles will soon have their own town meeting with Nodal to discuss their priorities. Patrick Scott, copresident of the National Alliance of Media Arts Centers

(NAMAC), deliberated over what he hoped would come out of that meeting. "I would like to see the discussion of public art broadened to include media art as a public art form," said Scott, brightening as he continued, "In the last few years there have been some definite strides towards recognition of the media arts as an art form. I think that Al is completely hip to that. I'm very excited that he's in this position and can help give more visibility to the media arts as a legitimate and equal art form in the constellation of arts."

Janet Smith, executive director at the Independent Feature Project/West, has already been tapped to serve on the Arts Advisory Committee. "I hope that this committee, through the independents of all the regional media arts centers that will have a chance to meet with [Nodal], will give him an idea of the diversity of media arts and the need to support the full spectrum of media artists," Smith said, "from experimental and avant-garde filmmakers to feature filmmakers who are working outside of the studio system to institutions who are exhibition- and presentation-oriented."

However, those who are footing the bill for Percent-for-Arts do not always share the artistic community's enthusiasm for the project. One dissenting faction is the city's Department of Water and Power (DWP). The DWP's assistant general manager of External Affairs, Daniel Waters, clarified his department's position. "We didn't feel that it was necessarily unreasonable to expend a small percentage of the total going into structures and buildings on the arts," Waters began. "We know that a number of other cities do that." He continued, "Our real concern was that we were being treated differently than the private sector and that the private sector would only have to kick in the fee on building permits, whereas the public sector would be required to kick it in on everything, all capital dollars spent in the city. And that didn't seem to us to be reasonable," Waters said. He added that the DWP had been advised by the City Attorney's office not to pay the tax, because it is illegal to impose a fee for which no services are being provided. "In fact," he pointed out, "the law was enacted without the approval of the City Attorney, which is a little unusual."

"The bottom line is that a lot of people don't understand what it's all about," Nodal countered. "We're going through a long process of educating, getting people involved. The several departments in the City—DWP, airports, harbor—that are proprietary departments, they don't really go by Council rules, they have their own rules and they're challenging it. At this point it's at the City Attorney's office, and he's going to rule on it," Nodal concluded. Percent-for-Arts stands to lose up to $4.8-million in proprietary department revenues if the City Attorney rules against the legality of the one percent charge on city public works projects, and up to $10-million if the interim ordinance on private development does not receive final approval next July.

In addition to this cloud on the horizon of the Los Angeles Endowment, arts funding for the state of California faces one of the largest budget cuts ever proposed: a $3-million reduction in the California Arts Council's budget, which was $15.6-million in fiscal year 1988-89. However, money is not the only reason that Nodal and others in the arts community feel that the success of Percent-for-Arts is critical. "In Los Angeles, for the first time ever, we're going to broaden the whole notion of quality to include non-European, non-Western approaches," Nodal declared earnestly. "We have a very Eurocentric attitude about quality—we all do. And L.A.'s the place where we can break that down."

*Janice Drickey is a freelance writer who covers the film and television industry in Los Angeles.*


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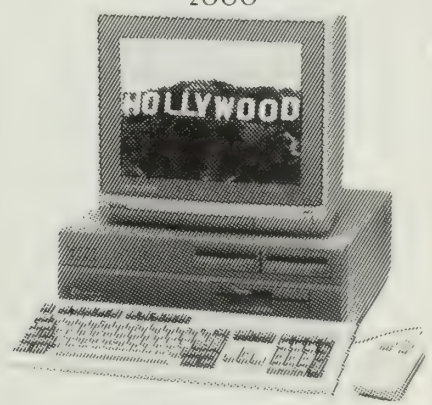
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# BLACK AND WHITE REVIVAL: THREE SUPER 8 FILMSTOCKS

Toni Treadway

Some super 8 filmmakers and videomakers are devoted to Kodachrome for its fine grain and brilliant colors, while others choose Ektachrome for its graininess and different color palette. But an ardent and growing subgroup of film- and videomakers have been rediscovering the merits of three black and white reversal filmstocks which Kodak offers the super 8mm filmmaker.

When asked about his use of black and white super 8, videomaker Jem Cohen could hardly contain his excitement. "Beyond the fact that it is just plain beautiful, I shoot black and white for two opposing reasons: First, black and white instantly alters the world we know, transforming and simplifying what we see into Something Else. Second, black and white is historically connected with documentary images—newsreels, photos in the paper—the very idea of the world preserved or captured 'just as it is.' The tension between these potentially warring tendencies (making strange and documenting) may be part of black and white's power."

He continues, "In my video *This Is a History of New York* I used all three black and white filmstocks loosely correlating them with different sections. *Prehistory* and *The Medieval Period* were shot with Tri-X and 4-X, for example, to encourage crudeness of grain and a more or less barbaric look, while *The Golden Age* has a lot of Plus X in it, making it silvery, smooth, and less harsh. At other times I choose super 8 for other than textural reasons. In *4:44 (From Her House Home)* the alteration between black and white and color has some correlation with going back and forth between the present and memory."



**Filmmaker Lewis Klahr choses black and white stock to "play with memory and film history" and for its graphic potential with cut-out animations, as in his *In The Month of Crickets.***

Courtesy filmmaker

A conversation with filmmaker Lewis Klahr parallels Cohen's comments, with Klahr noting that early filmmaking was all black and white. "It is inspiring to watch old movies, and then, I grew up watching black and white television. I shoot black and white for lots of unconscious reasons, to play with memory and film history. The graphic possibilities of black and white—what you can do with the contrast and the black, especially in my cut-out animations—create a landscape of imagination that is powerful to me. It's easier for me to see the world without all that color." Klahr added, "Black and white eliminates things, focusing your attention while pointing up ambiguity between old time and the present. Color stocks have greater resonance to the present, but I can't compete with the wonder of Technicolor."

There are other reasons to reach for black and white. Video artist Kristine Diekman teaches film and video at Rhode Island School of Design, where she notices more and more students are shooting black and white. "Color is complicated," she explains, "and black and white relieves beginners from technical problems like mixed lighting when shooting documentary style. The boys seem to go through a filming their bathroom phase, and there are the inevitable documents of cemeteries. A lot of students are combining images with text; they like black and white for its graphic possibilities. There is a timelessness to the black and white image."

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For making timeless images, Kodak manufactures three black and white super 8 films: Plus-X (EI 50): platinum-like reflections, fine grain, and lots of mid-range grays; Tri-X (EI 200): gritty

grain and more contrast than Plus-X; and 4-X (EI 400): very grainy with less dense blacks. There are built-in limitations to using these films. Some cameras cannot adjust their auto-exposure systems to Tri-X or 4-X, but the resulting overexposed footage can be acceptable or even aesthetically preferable to some filmmakers. All three black and white films are sold only in 50-foot silent cartridges. Kodak says they cannot prestripe these silent films for complicated technical reasons. Filmmakers must take precautions and handle black and white film more carefully than color film. Black and white stocks are much more susceptible to scratching, especially when just back from processing. However, these limitations rarely deter true black and white aficionados.

The best way to become proficient using the three stocks is to shoot a roll of each in a variety of lighting situations. Try shooting on an overcast day, a sunny day, indoors well-lit, indoors high-contrast, and in very low light to test how each stock performs. If your script or film idea has taken shape, shoot a bit in each location. Send all the films to the same lab, and when you get back the developed results, project them in a totally dark room. (First clean your projector with Lemon Pledge sprayed on a Q-tip to make sure the soft emulsions won't be scratched. I've seen test shots form the basis for prize-winning experimental films.) At this first viewing, you are assured an education in the "look" of each of these stocks—their relative graininess, exposure latitude, and the ways they compare with your own aesthetic preference. No matter how many people have asked which stock to shoot or which one looks better, the answer is always to conduct this test. Aesthetics are too personal, and this kind of personalized education is cheap.

All your images will be "archive quality" if you choose black and white stocks, assuming correct processing and storage. Kodak created regular 8mm for the nonprofessional market after their success with 16mm safety film. Today, media artists often recycle old footage in their new works. I often work on regular 8mm images dating from the early 1930s (both black and white and Kodachrome 25) that are still remarkable in quality, unless someone damaged them in a projector. An old-timer at Kodak told me George Eastman was loathe to scale down early motion picture cameras because he feared that smaller, lighter cameras would be taken off the tripod and waved around, making awful-looking movies. His fears were prophetic and his aesthetic the butt of avant-garde visual jokes.

I often hear complaints that super 8 stock is hard to find. Locating these stocks easily and in quantity requires centralized buying at a few locations so that the chosen store will keep up interest in carrying the stocks the filmmakers need. Organization seems to work, for in Boston black and white super 8 is available from $6.80 to $9.00 a roll, at five or six locations, with regular 8mm on the shelf alongside it. You can buy the stocks at the


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discount stores like 47th St. Photo in New York City (212-398-1410) or Solar Cine Products in Chicago (312-254-8310), or from Jesse Chambless in Atlanta (404-767-5210), who carries even the most obscure double 8mm stocks.

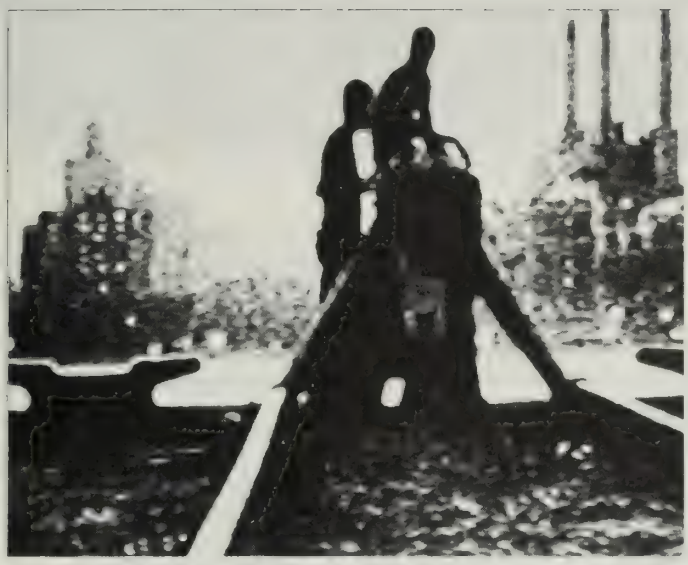
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When black and white is processed well it can look striking, so a good processing lab is essential. The Manhattan lab Kinolux, which was used by many super 8 filmmakers for processing and prints, closed its doors in early April, creating a panic when New York City filmmakers realized they had never looked beyond their backyard for super 8 processing and printing. Some of them have rediscovered Film Service (617-547-8501), a lab in Cambridge, Massachusetts, that operates as a department of Super8 Sound. The technician at Film Service is Bob Hum, a conscientious man whose daily black and white processing is consistently good. In response to new business from New Yorkers, Film Service is discussing a drop-off site in Manhattan. Hopefully, a courier connection will decrease the turnaround time and reduce the shipping and handling fees, which can become quite pricey when processing only a few rolls. Filmmakers lobbying for direct connection should talk to the owner, Philip Vigeant, at Super8 Sound's West Coast office in Burbank, California (818-848-5522).

Yale Laboratory in Hollywood, California (213-464-6181), also processes black and white every day and does fine black and white work. Although I hear complaints about occasional bungled rolls, any lab can have a mishap and each lab has its fans and detractors. A call to facilities manager Ted White at Film Arts Foundation in San Francisco revealed that a lot of Bay Area filmmakers are shooting black and white reversal, both super 8 and 16mm. There is new interest in 8/16 optical printing there, too, since FAF has a new J-K. White reports that filmmakers he knows and works with are using Yale Lab, AlphaCine in Seattle (800-426-7016), as well as Keeble & Schuchat (415-327-8996), a small lab in Palo Alto that specializes in reversal processing twice a week.

I'd recommend taking consumer advocacy seriously and working closely with lab personnel. Then, even if a problem arises, stick with that lab after you have developed a relationship. Switching labs just doesn't help the media arts field as the number of "wet" film labs dries up. Also, imagine how much damage to footage is possible if something scratches *your* roll of film in processing and you don't tell the lab *immediately*, taking your business elsewhere instead. Each filmmaker must take speedy action to keep the quality of work high and the services profitable enough to keep the labs interested in super 8 work.

Processing can cost as little as two dollars per roll, but beware the pitfalls of fast processing—hot drying, which causes curling; incomplete fixing; and scratches from handling by low-paid lab people. After a disaster with cheap processing



In *This Is a History of New York*, videomaker Jem Cohen used a different kind of black and white super 8 filmstock to shoot each of the videotape's three sections. This scene from *Prehistory* was shot in 4-X to get a grainy, barbaric look.

Courtesy videomaker

many filmmakers have decided that paying seven dollars a roll for good processing remains a better deal.

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There has been some frustration over the last year about getting prints of black and white films on black and white super 8 printstock. While some labs claim the printstock is discontinued, Kodak requires a special order of a enormous number of feet before they will perforate black and white reversal printstock for super 8. Labs are not willing to buy a lot of stock, fearing it will sit on their shelves, and have been unable to collaborate with others in sharing special orders from Kodak. Unless a number of filmmakers collectively organize to buy a quantity of super 8 black and white printstock through a Kodak dealer, I recommend another route: Have your film "blown up" (optically printed) to 16mm black and white negative and then make 16mm black and white release prints. There are a number of talented people who do professional optical printing. Stepping up from super 8 or 8mm reversal filmstock to 16mm negative allows control over contrast build-up. The results are certainly better than the best contact prints made from a black and white original on color super 8 printstock.

Contact prints made from black and white original to color printstock will look less sharp and less "black and white" than your original. They will be acceptable to viewers who have never seen the original but rarely to the filmmaker. Accept the inevitable, and do not hassle the technician if your contact super 8-to-super 8 print is soft. Ironically, it seems like more film exhibitors want to show super 8 films and are able to show them well, while good prints have become more expensive and difficult to obtain. If your film draws serious attention, consider traveling with the original or try the 16mm print method.

Some filmmakers have learned to be satisfied with a good transfer to video for exhibition and distribution of their black and white film, which can be transferred to video as "pure" black and white, without video color burst in the signal. This ensures the best, old-fashioned, early TV (before-color) look. "Pure" black and white video can look as moody as *film noir* movies on TV, but no burst precludes stable intercutting with color video later, unless color burst is added to the black and white footage during a subsequent transfer through a TBC. Also, if the piece might air on broadcast television, the engineers will require video with color burst. Instead of adding burst to the signal later, you can transfer the film as black and white with burst in the first place. Black and white film transferred to color video can look almost as good as "pure" black and white television if the transfer technician carefully controls the parameters. Both Jem Cohen and Lewis Klahr have works that were chosen to air on WNET's *Independent Focus* series in New York City, and their black and white looks very good in this format.

One final permutation of filmstocks, formats, modes of distribution, and not least of all, color or lack of it is the possibility of transferring color film to video as black and white. Shooting prestriped Kodachrome for direct sound-on-film and then desaturating the color in transfer can produce a very fine grain black and white image. It is also possible to render both black and white and color film on video in sepia or any other tint, thus expanding the range of aesthetic choices even further. While black and white super 8 filmstocks number three, the postproduction strategies and artistic applications are as varied as the people shooting black and white.

*Toni Treadway lives in Somerville, Massachusetts, where she coauthored* Super 8 in the Video Age *with Bob Brodsky.*

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# NOT JUST BLACK AND WHITE

**The videotape *Ojos Que No Ven* uses the popular *telenovela* form to reach Latino audiences with information about AIDS. Its story of a neighborhood's response to AIDS is reiterated in an accompanying educational pamphlet, shown here.**

Courtesy Instituto Familiar de la Raza photo JoAnne Seador

Catherine Saalfield and Ray Navarro

There is currently a proliferation of media dealing with AIDS which has spurred discussions about health care and alternative media production among those engaged in these issues. Due to the loss of so many lives, there is an urgency felt about AIDS matched by outrage at the insensitive response of network television. Independent media producers have been instrumental in bringing about attention to the AIDS crisis, providing critically accurate and culturally appropriate information about the syndrome that mainstream channels have neglected. In this context, alternative media has become an especially crucial activity for critics of the government's mishandling of effective educational campaigns. There is, however, no prescriptive mode of production for AIDS media, although it's generally agreed that what network TV considers appropriate for discussion stands in contradistinction to what activists want to talk about.

For some, the crisis brought about by city, state, and federal neglect of responsibility during the AIDS epidemic has provided the motivation behind their film and video work. Even though they may have no previous experience in film or video production, these activists are not only responding to the absence of appropriate information, but also specifically working to counteract misinformation. For others, the lack of immediate, constant, accurate, and thorough education in their own communities has necessitated making media that does not exclude people based on literacy, income, geographic location, or race. In order to accomplish this ambitious undertaking, those involved in making alternative AIDS media—like AIDS activists in general—recognize the need for educational material designed to address the particular idioms, dialects, and traditions of various communities. Fulfilling this need, however, often challenges definitions of alternative and independent media, since these materials frequently look and sound like conventional mass media productions. No matter how superficially conventional, however, the tapes and films we will discuss here are experimental treatments of sensitive issues. They have been produced on the front lines of community-based AIDS networks by people of color who provide services to their communities.

To issue demands for culturally sensitive materials without taking into account the economic, cultural, and racial obstacles that exist in the independent sector of film and video assumes that people of color will be able to easily overcome such well-entrenched barriers. This expectation mirrors the notion that the response of the African-American and Latino communities to the AIDS crisis has been deficient. Both assumptions overlook parallels between the poor access to health care facilities faced by people of color and the lack of access to the means of media production. When asking, "Where are the videotapes from minority communities?" one may as well be asking, "Where are the Black physicians, the Latino dentists?" Representation in this context does not only mean seeing one's body in narratives on the silver screen. It also refers to locating one's body in experimental AIDS drug trials and on the agenda of AIDS prevention policies.

For those with a background in art or film, it's not too difficult to create conventional, realistic documentaries or docudramas. But the community-based films and tapes we will discuss here weren't produced by such individuals, nor are they merely the results of an organization being handed a camera rig and told, "Here, represent yourself." Health educator Yannick Durand, audio-visual coordinator for the Brooklyn AIDS Task Force (BATF) and producer of the videotape *Mildred Pearson: When You Love a Person*, sees her video work as a product of the crisis. "I'm not a media producer," says Durand. "I am an education specialist, and I choose the video medium out of necessity." Likewise, the crew for *Mildred Pearson* consisted of activists and community workers.

The works discussed here all serve their intended audiences especially effectively and are produced by the staff members of community service centers who then take active roles at screenings of the work, generating discussions about the information they present. Since these works are primarily educational vehicles, the questions they raise are related to their status as alternative media, which is not identical but might overlap with functions of oppositional media. For instance, as landmarks in the field of AIDS educational materials, how do these works differ from government-sponsored AIDS propaganda or mass media AIDS coverage? Given the threat to Black and Latino communities that increased use of drugs poses, can clean needle use be represented both explicitly and persuasively? Given traditional cultural frameworks and sexual stereotypes, can safer sex practices be advocated, and if so, how?

In *Problems in Materialism and Culture* Raymond Williams maintains, "There is clearly something we can call alternative to the effective dominant culture, and there is something else that we can call oppositional in a true sense." For Williams, one of the key issues in cultural analysis is not so much locating which elements of a particular practice constitute a challenge to the existing social order, but rather locating the interrelationships within and between cultural practices and the institutions of their production and




reception. He writes, "We have to break from the common procedure of isolating the object and then analyzing its components. On the contrary we have to discover the nature of a practice and then its conditions."*

An excellent rebuttal to the treatment—or nontreatment—of sexual relationships and drug use in the mass media is *Se Met Ko...*, made by the Haitian Women's Committee of the American Friends Service, a community organization in New York City that has redirected its programs serving Haitian women and placed AIDS at the top of its agenda. As part of this initiative, they have explored the options presented by narrative filmmaking and media access. Their half-hour 16mm film produced in 1988 is designed to strengthen the U.S. Haitian community in light of its stigmatization as an AIDS "risk group" by employing community traditions and myths.

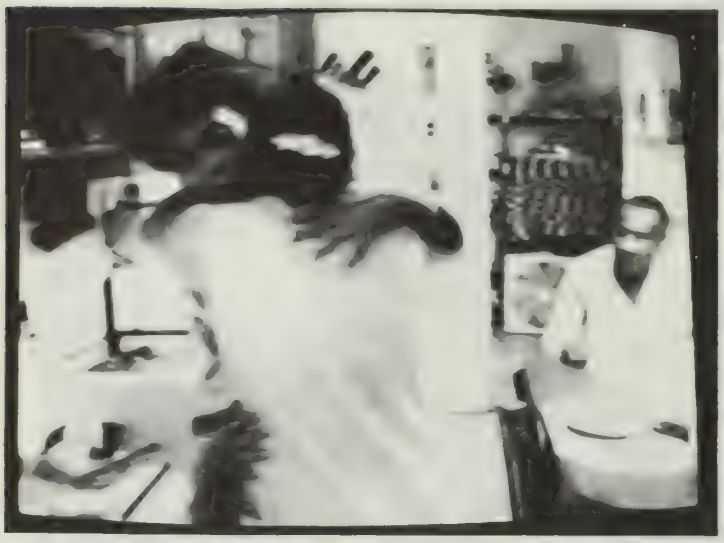
Early in the AIDS crisis the mainstream press profiled Haitians as typical "AIDS victims," along with gay men and intravenous drug users. Shots on network news programs of Haitians standing behind fences and dead bodies washing up on Miami beaches established an oppressive field of images for the world to feast upon. *Se Met Ko...*, then, provides information by counteracting incorrect images that do little more than produce scapegoats. Here the information is contained within the entertaining form of soap opera, complete with neighborhood gossip, drama, and compassionate engagement.

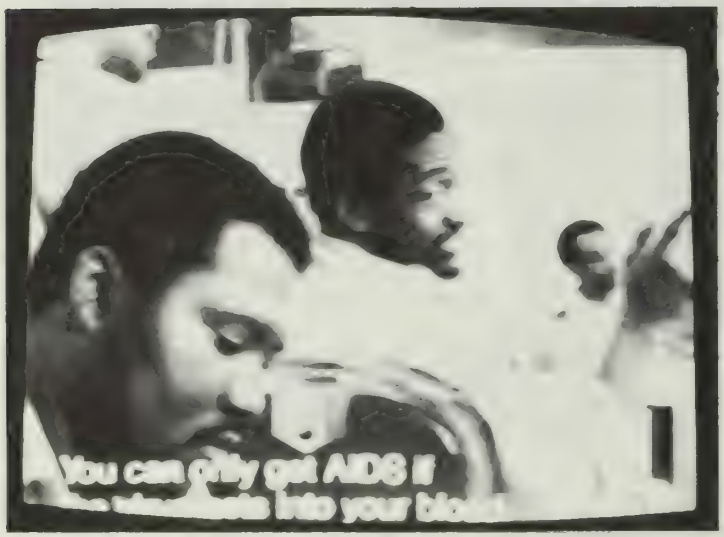
*Ojos Que No Ven*, an hour-long *telenovela* (TV soap opera) aimed at the Latino community and produced by El Instituto Familiar de la Raza in San Francisco, similarly depicts a neighborhood's response to AIDS. About two years ago, the number of people of color who were infected with HIV became more widely acknowledged and publicized. At the same time, reports emerged from San Francisco and the Center for Disease Control

* Raymond Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso Editions, 1980), p. 47.

Countering clichéd images of Haitians as a "high risk" group, *Se Met Ko...* uses TV soap opera formats, complete with neighborhood gossip, drama, and compassionate engagement, to pass on information about AIDS to the Haitian community in New York City and elsewhere.

A central scene of *Se Met Ko...* takes place in a barbershop, where men banter about condoms and ways of transmitting HIV. The film directs its messages about safe sex and sexual responsibility at men.






claiming that the instances of AIDS cases among gay white men was "leveling off," while cases among Latinos and Blacks (both gay and straight) were increasing. Released in 1987 and designed to be culturally sensitive, *Ojos* plots the progress of Doña Rosa, the program's central character, who confronts her fear of her son's homosexuality by educating herself about AIDS. In a visit to her neighborhood health clinic, she frankly discusses HIV and homosexuality with a counselor and then conveys this vital knowledge to friends, her daughter, and her neighbors. Doña Rosa's educational experience is interwoven with that of other characters who exhibit varying levels of ignorance, fear, and denial about the risks of contracting and transmitting HIV and developing AIDS.

Before the production of *Ojos*, El Instituto Familiar de la Raza was a mental health agency serving Latinos in the Bay Area. The Latino AIDS Project approached the Instituto about collaborating on a theater piece on AIDS, and the *telenovela* was eventually decided upon as the most appropriate form, given its popularity among Latino television audiences. Originally the piece was budgeted at $10,000, but this figure was increased to $50,000 to underwrite a television production that would adequately convey information using a genre familiar to community members. Indeed, the success of the finished tape—which employs a cast of activists and nonprofessional actors, as well as several professionals—lies in its episodic soap opera format where families respond to the crisis in relation to issues of faithfulness, monogamy, and homosexuality. The program's technical quality can be attributed to the assistance of a professional production company, but the carefully conceived style and content are the result of community involvement and collaboration.

Another example of AIDS educational material made by and aimed at people of color is *Mildred Pearson: When You Love a Person*, which consists of a short account of a Brooklyn woman's experience of the death of her son Bruce. Producer Durand maintains that there are not just color barriers to be dismantled by AIDS educational materials and their implementation, but culture barriers as well. A tape such as *Mildred Pearson* has been an effective vehicle for social change because it appeals to a tradition of storytelling and retains a vernacular and idiomatic use of Black English. Furthermore, it borrows the popular form of a photo-album, using snapshots to testify to the life of a person with AIDS (PWA) and his family. Because of this imaginative treatment, the tape addresses a political yet personal sense of loss without sentimentalizing or idealizing. Without compromise it expresses anger at the inadequacies of AIDS care and access to health care for African-Americans. Nowhere is the call to action clearer than in Pearson's reasoned appeal for community support for PWAs and their families who demand improvements in the care given by understaffed and underfunded hospitals. By picturing Bruce, a gay PWA, as alive, vital, loving, and loved by his extended family, *Mildred Pearson* also indicates the ways that "being gay" is treated in different communities.

When discussing community responses to AIDS by people of color, it's important to note that oppositional postures like the gay liberation movement can provoke controversies about assimilation among people of color. As Bell Hooks writes, "Often black gay folk feel extremely isolated because there are tensions in their relationships with the larger, predominantly white gay community, and tensions created by racism within the black communities around issues of homophobia."** Nevertheless, the traditional Black and Latino leadership has recently adopted some of the methods of activism and community intervention—such as guerrilla research and public protests—around AIDS that have been employed by the white gay community. This counterassimilation is a process whereby traditionally separate communities, defined as separate minorities by the dominant culture, have incorporated one another's forms of direct action as political strategy and a means of self-empowerment. One example is El Instituto Familiar de la Raza's coproduction with the Latino AIDS Project, where a subgroup of a cultural minority encouraged its larger community to confront a crisis.

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Tapes and films like *Mildred Pearson*, *Ojos Que No Ven*, and *Se Met Ko...* function concurrently as advocacy and sympathetic, seductive narratives. They employ entertaining forms, primarily that of episodic narrative built around dramatic encounters between simple character types or, in the case of *Mildred Pearson*, layers of personal recollections about family relationships. In other contexts, these kinds of productions might be viewed as merely standard approaches to subject matter and conventional storytelling. However, by addressing controversial, often repressed variations of sexual and cultural identities *within* subcultures, these works situate themselves at the cutting edge of cultural criticism. Countering programmatic hierarchies

** Bell Hooks, "Reflections on Homophobia and Black Communities," *Outlook*, Summer 1988, p. 25.

of race, class, and gender, they realign questions for viewers in terms of issues—not identities.

Another recently produced tape, David Garcia's short *telenovela*, *Alicia*, is aimed at the female sexual partners of IV-drug users (IVDUs). HIV-positive women like Alicia, the main character in Garcia's tape, have been grossly unrecognized and underserved despite the prevalence of HIV among them. (In contrast, *Se Met Ko...* features a woman protagonist who is apparently healthy and emphasizes preventative measures.) Within this framework, the tape examines reproductive rights and HIV concerns for women, but does not treat these questions separately from issue related to race, drug use, or economic dependency. The narrative also addresses perinatal transmission of HIV—from the mother to the baby—during pregnancy. In docudrama sequences where she alternately rages against her husband's carelessness and finds support and camaraderie with her mother, Alicia and her family grapple with her HIV-positive status.

*Alicia* provides a narrative that encourages viewers to acknowledge and change the conditions of sexism and family trauma. Contesting traditionally oppressive attitudes produced by patriarchal family structures, this type of drama alleviates the sense of isolation shared by those most invisible. To date, no major campaign has been geared toward the female partners of male IVDUs. In this context *Alicia*, above all, must be seen as a service to an otherwise ignored community. In the final segments of the piece, Alicia's woman doctor discusses modes of HIV transmission. Safer sex for lesbians and woman-to-woman transmission are mentioned—another landmark within AIDS media aimed at Latinas and Latinos. Although the tape's melodramatic structure fully employs what are dominant codes of representation available to Latinos, its designated audience are called upon to oppose the oppressive roles assigned to women under patriarchy. The cycle of AIDS misinformation is thus effectively challenged by *Alicia*, while no apparently radical formal innovations are attempted.

None of the work we have mentioned unconditionally constitutes an oppositional media practice, but all of it has encouraged audiences to respond to discrimination experienced during the AIDS crisis. The reception of *Ojos*, for example, doesn't fit comfortably in any predetermined slot. It was warmly received at the Gay and Lesbian Film Festival in Los Angeles, although it was not specifically produced by and for gay men or lesbians. On a festival panel, the tape was represented by its non-gay producer, José Gutierrez, not its gay scriptwriter Rodrigo Reyes. Gutierrez discussed issues of discrimination in the area of language and access to postproduction funding and then related this to gay concerns. In New York City, on the other hand, authorities at UHF Channel 47 debated whether the scenes of gay men together were offensive and whether the tape was suitable for broadcast. (Subsequently, they decided to show it in a Spanish-language series on AIDS.) And, at the International Latino Film and Video Festival held last autumn in Manhattan, the tape was given only an early morning screening and thus attracted a small audience. Whereas commercial Spanish-language broadcasting can function as an *alternative* to English-only TV, it maintains mass media values. On the other hand, *Ojos*, which is unapologetic about its presentation of homosexuality and AIDS, also functions as *oppositional* media.

Given the complexity of addressing homosexuality *and* homophobia, the effect of producing *Ojos* upon the Instituto as a whole has been unprecedented. As a direct result of the tape's profits and its favorable reception by curators, the organization broadened its activities to include the Latino AIDS Project, which in turn entailed adding gay rights to the roster of issues it dealt with in the Bay Area Latino community. The emphasis placed upon family values (*familiar* in Spanish means "of the family") and the role of the barrio network in supporting PWAs encouraged by the Instituto's programs is reinforced in the coming out story central to the unravelling of plots in *Ojos Que No Ven*. In addition to providing ideological support for the organization's work, the tape has also proven effective as a development tool. Funds raised through tape sales and rentals have allowed the Instituto to expand its counseling, outpatient, food, and clothing support services to PWAs. Because of the tape's effectiveness as a tool for AIDS education,

**Mildred Pearson recounts the experience of losing her son to AIDS in *Mildred Pearson: When You Love a Person*, a work that crosses cultural barriers by retaining a vernacular use of Black English.**

***Mildred Pearson: When You Love a Person*** **makes use of family snapshots, such as this of her deceased son Bruce. While addressing the politics of inadequate health care for African-Americans, the video, without sentimentalizing, also conveys the sense of personal loss.**





corporate funding for the Instituto has increased manifold, although this money will not necessarily be channeled into future video production.

The Haitian Women's Committee's film *Se Met Ko...* exhibits a relationship between funding and production remarkably similar to that of the Instituto's *Ojos*. *Se Met Ko...*'s executive producer Patricia Benoit worked closely with playwright Harry Kondoleon in developing the screenplay. To further the educational purpose of the film, the Hunt Foundation gave the Haitian Women's Committee funds to underwrite the publication of an educational manual that would facilitate discussion following screenings of the film.

The film's title phrase, "Se met ko," is the beginning of a Haitian proverb which, in its entirety, translates to "the master of the body has control over

The title character in *Alicia*, who has tested positive for the HIV virus, is told by her doctor the facts about AIDS transmission. Throughout the tape, issues of race, drug use, economic dependency, and sexism are treated as interrelated.

*Alicia*, aimed at the female sexual partners of IV-drug users, also counsels viewers on female-to-female transmission of HIV.





the body." *Se Met Ko...* directs its didactic messages at men, demonstrating, for instance, how the use of condom must be a shared responsibility. This emphasis represents a radical move, since women historically have been made to bear the responsibility for birth control and, not surprisingly, are being forced to bear the burden of responsibility for safer sex with men. Thus, this film depicts a sexually active man confronting his denial of risk and learning to discuss sexuality openly with his wife. The film locates this behavior within a believable set of attitudes and social behaviors, conveyed by joking and teasing among a group of men. A central scene in the film is set in an all-male environment, the barbershop. Some men play dominoes while others receive haircuts, all the while everyone banters about *latex* and various modes of transmission of HIV. Shot in Creole with English subtitles, the film answers a need in the Haitian community for familiar representations. The producers' choice of genre—as with *Ojos*—was soap opera, which presents scenarios showing the involvement of neighbors and family in the plight of PWAs in a recognizable form.

In the face of AIDS/immigration policies that discriminate against Haitians and Cubans (under the Cuban-Haitian Adjustment Act, HIV-positive immigrants are denied refugee residency status, or political asylum) *Se Met Ko...* presents daily issues within immigrant Caribbean cultures in the U.S. For example, an early scene shows a nervous shop owner confronting a customer's fear of "AIDS infected" fruit and thereby establishes an opportunity for the lead male character Jean-Louis to suggest the need for preventive health care and HIV-antibody tests. In other scenes, the economic necessity of extended families sharing living quarters places group conversations about AIDS within the intimacy of the kitchen and the bedroom. These and other locations use the spaces of daily life to suggest the need and possibility for detailed discussions of AIDS transmission and its prevention, as well as to portray expressions of insecurity, fear, anger, and compassion. In addition to conveying information to Haitian viewers, the producers intend to counteract racist images of Haitians in the dominant media and allow their community to see themselves.

The treatment of AIDS as a contagious disease in *Se Met Ko...* differs from that in *Ojos* in significant ways. For this comparison, it is important to examine how "homosexuality" is explicitly identified as a mode of transmission in two very distinct cultures. *Se Met Ko...* includes no gay characters. The men in the barbershop scene refer to "massissi," a pejorative term that roughly translates as "queer." Yet, this occurs in the context of a conversation about discrimination toward PWAs and Haitians alike: "Americans give Haitians a hard time. And Haitians give queers a hard time." The parallel construction of this statement is meant to make a point about discrimination, not to offend. As one character points out, "Imagine if you're queer and Haitian!"

*Ojos* deals with issues of homosexuality more directly but at the same time adheres to an equally specific cultural fabric. In this work gay sexuality is represented by means of cultural stereotypes but then employs these stereotypes to question clichéd ideas about homosexuality. The most explosive example occurs when the tape's main character, community pillar Doña Rosa, finds her son Manuel making out with another man. The encounter is accompanied by dramatic pounding of Aztec drums and bells. In this semi-comic, semi-serious bit of melodrama, the mother's horrified face is juxtaposed with the equally shocked face of her son. Nonetheless, Manuel continues to appear ambiguously macho throughout the story. For example, he is seen on top of his boyfriend when his mother enters the scene. Although this position does not necessarily makes him the active rather than the passive partner, *Ojos* functions well precisely because it refutes certain social codes having to do with "gayness" while leaving others—like "machismo"—intact.

Another example of *Ojos*' cultural specificity is the characterization of Joaquín, a bisexual, married man. The extent of his sexual encounters with men remains ambiguous and thus does not upset his macho identity. The inclusion of this character and the dilemma he faces when a former lover notifies him that he has tested positive emphasizes the necessity for sexual beings to take precautions and to inform one another of past and present risky activities. The final scene in *Ojos* takes place in a drag bar, where these two men and other characters meet while drag queens lip synch to the salsa tune *Cumbia del SIDA*, a song that warns everybody to take precautions—even drag queens. Like the opening of *Se Met Ko...*, which takes place at a community dance, the dance floor functions as an apropos metaphor for sexual tensions that lead to social dramas during the AIDS crisis.

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Because of their narrative structures and efforts to educate particular communities about AIDS, both *Se Met Ko...* and *Ojos* assume another challenge: representing PWAs in a manner that does not replicate a sensationalized view of deterioration, loneliness, and romanticized loss found in the mass media, and all too frequently in the art world as well. The treatment of PWAs in *Se Met Ko...* was devised in response to Haitian educators' earlier use of shock tactics, like showing graphic depictions of

Karposi's Sarcoma lesions and other external symptoms of opportunistic infections. In such works, these physical conditions are explained to the audience in voiceover narrations delivered by doctors and "other experts." In *Se Met Ko...* the only PWA mentioned is Yves, a man who, as one of his neighbors puts it, "isn't gay or an intravenous-drug user." Yves is never shown, but he is introduced as the patient occupying an ambulance that has arrived to take him to the hospital. This scene of responsive emergency health care presents an optimistic version of the role hospitals could play in the AIDS crisis, as opposed, say, to the realities of waiting four days in emergency room.

*Ojos* introduces several related issues in a scene where Doña Rosa pays a visit to Tomas, a PWA-friend from work, in his hospital room. How does this scene differ from demeaning representations of PWAs, given that Tomas is shown coughing and struggling to stay alive? One important difference is that this section of the tape serves as a demonstration of various ways of communicating with a sick friend. Most effective, however, is the implication that moral judgements are irrelevant and insensitive when dealing with PWAs. Tomas is never identified as either gay or an intravenous drug user, since the producers hoped that viewers would then examine their own assumptions about how he became ill.

Documenting and characterizing IVDUs who may have become infected with HIV by sharing syringes offers a telling comparison between these independent, community-based productions and mass media offerings. The IVDU in the network television reports on AIDS is always unproblematically presented as a "risky person," a certain carrier of HIV. This desperate individual, whose identity cannot be revealed, inhabits dark alleys and hunches beside low brick walls—at once seen and not seen. Apparently as an afterthought, a black rectangle is often keyed over the eyes in a coy solution to the sensitive legal problem of showing people engaged in illegal acts.

There are a few tapes produced *for* IVDUs and their sexual partners yet clearly not made *by* them. One of these, *Needle Talk*, was made by the Department of Health of the City of New York and employs Black idioms, dialect, and a cameo by Dionne Warwick in an attempt to appeal to Black IVDUs. However, this earnest, almost ingenuous, effort to inform people who shoot drugs about modes of HIV transmission does not escape the temptation to marginalize and isolate the tape's supposed audience. After two long recitations by a Black physician and counselor, the viewer hears from a recovering addict whose sorely needed perspective is unfortunately almost subsumed by endless pans of a shooting gallery exterior with people going in and out. Such uncritical use of a surveillance-like techniques within what is an otherwise sympathetic scenario romanticizes urban decay at the same time as it paints an alienating picture of this environment and the people who inhabit it. *Alicia* also contains a somewhat contrived dramatization to illustrate the connection between drug use and HIV transmission. At the tape's conclusion Alicia's husband Carlos, an active drug user, passes up a hit that his buddy in the gutter (literally) offers him. Although the illustration of needle sharing may be intended to sympathetically represent the danger to addicts, this offer of dope is hardly credible, since addicts don't like to share their drugs.

In contrast, the scenes in *Ojos* involving IVDUs illustrate ways in which male-bonding and sexist attitudes are often reinforced by drug use. Interlocking networks of drug dealing and prostitution are shown as part of a narrative sequence that involves Carlos, a young man who offers cocaine and PCP to his friend Billy, who is then shown how to clean a syringe by a recovering addict, Roberto. Later Carlos goes to his hooker friend Cindy's apartment to sell her drugs, but first teaches her how to sterilize a needle. Despite the severity of her addiction Cindy appears willing to follow the directions in using *chloro* to clean the needle, which Carlos then rents to her. Though imaginative in its portrayal of community, such scenarios establish a potentially explosive and negative identification for the viewer. Like the barbershop dialogue in *Se Met Ko...*, the challenge remains that of presenting a convincing depiction of changes in behavior, while not violating certain cultural tenets. One consequence of this approach is that ingrained biases may persist on the part of the audience. *Ojos* presents a partial reply to this paradox, by including a recovering addict in the story. Learning to shoot drugs safely implies intervention, a possible bridge to recovery from addiction.

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Rodrigo Reyes, the scriptwriter of *Ojos*, has remarked that to assume white intellectuals control the discussion concerning the AIDS crisis or possess the only critique of the health care system misses the mark entirely. These are big subjects and there are varied cultural responses. In an era when film and video are regarded as the primary modes for conveying information, the work we have discussed here functions as *reinformation*, from the slick TV format of *Ojos* to the home-video quality of *Mildred Pearson*. Their reception has been mediated largely by the conditions of their production—made as collaborations between existing social service agencies and independents, or by agencies that take up media production. Although these productions have been included in some of the exhibitions of work made in response to the AIDS crisis sponsored by mainstream cultural institutions, they are primarily the results of practical efforts to form alternative AIDS educational networks in the shadow of government inaction. As such, media production dealing with AIDS and undertaken by people of color must be encouraged, not just with approving words but with funding and distribution, and, especially, with opportunities to be seen.

*Catherine Saalfield and Ray Navarro are media activists who live and work in New York City. Their collaborations have focused on AIDS and other lesbian/gay concerns.*

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**Distribution Information**

*Alicia*: ADAPT, attn. Celeste Derr, 85 Bergen St., Brooklyn, NY 11201; (718) 596-1800

*Mildred Pearson: When You Love a Person*: Brooklyn AIDS Task Force, attn. Yannick Durand, 22 Chapel St., Brooklyn, NY 11201; (718) 596-4781

*Needle Talk*: Dept. of Health, attn. Nureen Murphy, 125 Worth St. Box A/1, New York, NY 10013; (212) 566-5012

*Ojos Que No Ven*: Instituto Familiar de la Raza, attn. Anne Foster, 2515 24th St. #2, San Francisco, CA 94110; (415) 647-5450

*Se Met Ko...*: American Friends Service Committee, attn. David Harris, 15 Rutherford Pl., New York, NY 10003; (212) 598-0965

# TO COLOR, OR NOT TO COLOR

## Debates between Entrepreneurs, Auteurs and Audiences on the Sanctity of Hollywood Classics




**In the commercial culture of the 1930s, color gained ground in both mass production and reproduction. Of the two major weekly magazines that emerged in this era, *Life* distinguished itself with classically simple, full-page black and white cover pictures, but *Look* competed aggressively for readers with busier, colorful graphic appeal, such as this March 29, 1938, cover that combined one large how-to shot in color bordered by a side-column of monochrome news and fan photos.**

Sally Stein

*"In every era the attempt must be made anew to wrest tradition away from a conformism that threatens to overpower it."*

*—Walter Benjamin,*
"Theses on the Philosophy of History," 1940

Even on the surface, the present controversy surrounding colorization is complicated, or at least multi-faceted. Like other types of appropriation, colorization raises legal, economic, plus, some would argue, moral questions of authorship, ownership, and control. In addition, colorization challenges the notion of the integrity of filmic work at a time when film production is threatened by the encroachment of electronic media, and the reception of film is increasingly governed by the terms of television broadcasting and expanding systems of video distribution for home consumption. It hardly needs saying that the dominance of TV and the rising consumption of movies at home have shaped the tastes and habits of a new generation of viewers in ways which significantly affect both contemporary film and the status and meaning of older motion pictures.

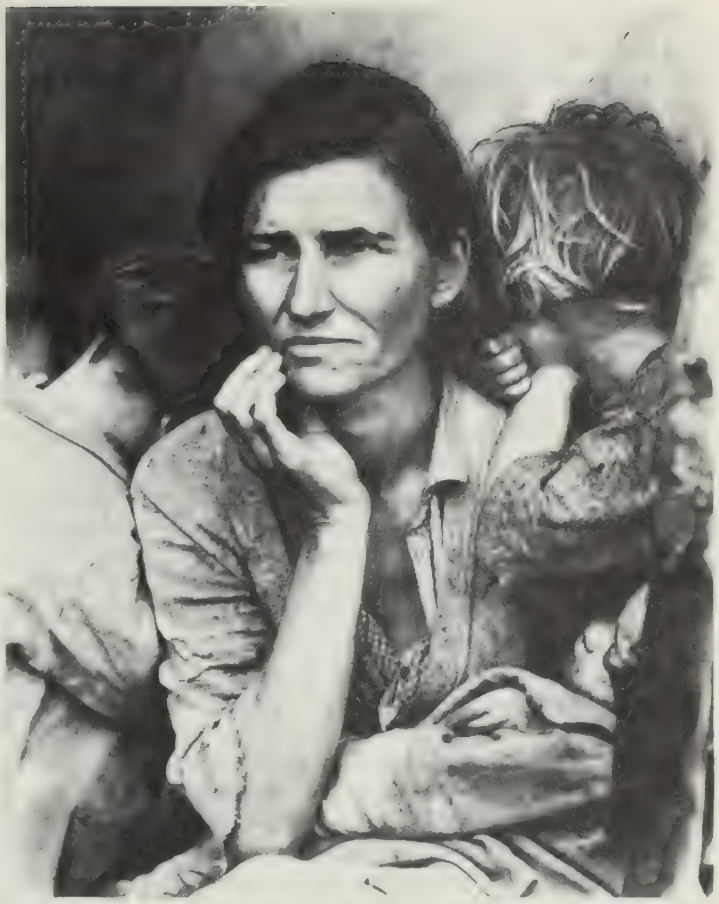
My initial fascination with the colorization question was historically motivated. For a number of years, I have been studying the emergence in 1930s photography of the codes of color and black and white. That topic assumed a more contemporary resonance when I recognized that some of the cultural connotations I was trying to decipher in this formative era of mass reproduction and mass culture were being explicitly articulated as the codes themselves were becoming unraveled.

I had long been struck by how the use of black and white media in thirties documentary served as a way of holding change in abeyance, *monochromizing* the present to make it look more traditional, static, as well as abject, and/or natural. For those who grew up in this era, whose images of the world were formed before mass culture became either so pervasive or so colorful, color remained an alien sign. Roland Barthes in his last essay on photography, *Camera Lucida*, attempts to explain his confessed dislike of color in this subjective vein: "I always feel (unimportant what actually occurs) that...color is a coating applied *later on* to the original truth of the black-and-white photograph. For me, color is an artifice, a cosmetic (like the kind used to paint corpses). What matters to me is not the photograph's "life" (a purely ideological notion) but the certainty that the photographed body touches me with its own rays and not with a superadded light."[1]

Barthes' parenthetical linkage of cosmetics with corpses is noteworthy for the way it bypasses the more common association of cosmetics with women in general, and in particular the adoption of cosmetics by women when they leave the intimate, child-oriented, domestic sphere. But while Barthes' final commentary on photography is exceptional for its obsessive drive to recapture through photography the child's state of grace with the mother, the discourse surrounding colorization discloses a fairly widespread psychic investment in the notion of color as an invasive force.

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Although video computer technology was first used to add color to black and white film footage in 1978, it was not until the mid 1980s that colorization became a common and notorious mass media technique.[2] In the first years of experimentation, the process was mostly used to revamp vintage cartoons and slapstick comedies, the kind of fare rerun on Saturday mornings for the kids. Protests mounted only after colorization began to spill over into other genres. In particular, a coalition of filmmakers, critics, and some viewers rapidly formed once colorization threatened to alter the complexion of popular film dramas of the 1930s. These films have been



**Black and white photography remained the preferred medium for serious documentary photographers during the Depression. In the classic New Deal icon by Farm Security Administration photographer Dorothea Lange, *Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California, 1936*, the absence of color contributed greatly to the underlying message of bedrock values surviving under enormous hardship.**

Courtesy Library of Congress

integral to the national mythology of Depression era crisis and recovery. The resulting colorization controversy gained considerable attention in the press, but this coverage has provided little analysis of the various economic, legal, and cultural motivations for the investment in this technology, or the reasons for hostile responses to it.

In any controversy, villains are useful figures. Although Ted Turner was neither the inventor of the process nor the first producer to capitalize on it, he made a lot of enemies by applying the process to some of the most venerable black and white Hollywood classics. Moreover, Turner has no qualms about playing villain, welcoming the publicity which accompanies the role. "Virtually everybody in America knows about colorization," he recently proclaimed. "All the protests were great promotion. A lot of younger people would never have heard about these older movies without the controversy."[3] Turner by no means invented the script of Philistine mass producer. When he goes on record spurning elite culture—"I think the movies look better in color. Art is in the eye of the beholder. Picasso doesn't do squat for me."—he is merely echoing the famed remarks of Henry Ford that he would not give five cents for all the art the world had produced.[4]

Turner became a major player in the colorization controversy after he already had successfully launched Cable News Network in Atlanta and decided to make his mark in Hollywood. In 1986 he acquired MGM and with it the film company's "library," the collection of 3,500 movies produced by MGM, RKO, and all Warner Brothers films made before 1950. At the time, Turner's public statements of intention—"we're going to restore MGM to the old glory days of *Gone with the Wind*"[5]—led many industry analysts to assume that Turner's acquisition of MGM was motivated by the objective of vertical integration—controlling both production and distribution of mass media. Very quickly, however, Turner resold the company while retaining the library, so that it soon appeared as if Turner had in mind only to recycle the huge archive of films for television broadcast.

Although Turner now has begun to produce feature-length TV movies for broadcast on his network, his first moves in Hollywood confounded expectations that he was aiming to make it as a major producer. For Turner neither moved into production in the traditional sense nor remained content with collecting royalties from the distribution of MGM classics. Rather than accepting the alternatives of innovation or preservation, Turner struck out on the novel path of revamping film classics to suit the tastes of a contemporary market. And it was precisely this middle strategy which proved most troubling to Hollywood's "creative community" and faithful film buffs, groups lumped together by one colorizer as the "cultists-purists."[6]

There were two principal factors that mitigated in favor of colorization. First, some of these films, although physically part of the MGM collection, no longer had copyright protection or faced imminent copyright expiration. Thus they risked falling into that dreaded space in capitalism known as public domain. The technology of colorization presented the possibility of recovering property rights through copyright protection.

The U. S. Copyright Office became directly involved in the colorization controversy after it received applications for copyright protection for colorized versions of 10 motion pictures and one TV program between 1985 and 1986 from Turner/Warner, Hal Roach Studios, Disney, and Twentieth Century Fox. It then issued a notice of public inquiry on the subject and received 46 comments. Debate ranged from aesthetic and moral issues to the legal question of whether this computer-based technology involved sufficient human authorship. An existing Copyright Office regulation stipulated that mere variation of color did not qualify for copyright protection, but this regulation did not preclude registration for copyright in those cases where works contained some other elements of originality, such as the original arrangement of combinations of colors. Existing regulations also made qualification contingent upon human intervention: the Copyright Office determined that numerous color selections must be made by human beings from an extensive human inventory. Furthermore, the range and extent of addition must represent more than a trivial variation; the overall appearance must be modified, so that coloring a few frames or sequences would not suffice. Interestingly, the reverse process, removal of color, was categorically excluded as a means of qualifying for legal protection as a derivative work, presumably because such a process could be accomplished with hardly any human intervention.[7]

After months of deliberation, the U.S. Copyright Office delivered its ruling in June 1987. Ralph Oman, U.S. register of copyrights and immediate arbiter in grey matters—or should we say tinted matters—such as these, explained his decision in a *New York Times* op-ed column of June 24, 1987. He began forthrightly, "I'm smack in the middle of a very American debate—art versus money." He proceeded to explain why he was ruling, like any good American, in favor of money: "Until Congress changes the law to give directors a moral right [to control alterations of their works], I have to apply the existing copyright law, which merely permits me to decide whether a colorized version meets the standard of authorship. That standard does not require uniqueness or artistic merit. It requires originality, a certain minimum amount of creative expression and that the work be created by a human being."[8]

According to his interpretation of these criteria, Oman decided that certain colorized versions of black and white motion pictures were eligible for copyright registration—and thus protection—as derivative works. In his judgment, a colorized film qualified as a derivative work if the addition constitutes more than a trivial change and if the derivation could be demonstrated to contain "a certain minimum amount of individual creative human authorship and in this case [is] produced by existing computer-coloring technology."[9]

While his ruling hinged upon a finding of "a certain minimum amount of

individual creative human authorship," the economic value of the process hinges upon its degree of automation. With the present state of colorizing technology, approximately 1,000 of the average 200,000 frames that make up a feature film—or one half of one percent—have to be individually colored, and the computer program makes color determinations for the rest. Yet the legal requirement of "a certain minimum amount of individual creative human authorship" raises the possibility that if the process were further automated, the derivative work might no longer be eligible for copyright protection,which in all probability will limit the direction of future technological developments.

To the opposition, Oman made conciliatory gestures. The decision, he emphasized, would not allow for removal of color or color enhancement on already colored films, even where fading had taken place. Moreover, it would not affect the public domain status of the original, or in his words, "the underlying black and white work. Cinemas could show the original film freely, video retailers could copy it and sell it at will and colorists could make as many new versions as they wanted."[10] He also promised that this would not be the last word. Both Congress and the courts, he predicted, would produce new legislation and legal precedents.

Overall, Oman's decision backed the owners of copyright and the owners of new technology, since the ruling granted new copyright protection of 75 years to all the colorized films that had been submitted for registration. Thus colorization succeeded as a means of using capital intensive technology to create a new profitable product from an old one, by simultaneously expanding the market for the product and regaining exclusive control over the product's use.

The second factor mitigating in favor of the colorization trend is money. As Oman noted clearly, money is directly involved in the issue of copyright protection, but the profit motive works at many levels in this instance. The production costs of this high tech process are not cheap, except in relative terms. Colorization estimates vary, but one *New York Times* article figured that the average cost ranges from $2,000 to $3,000 per minute of film, depending on the complexity of the footage.[11] Although a full-length feature may cost $250,00 to $300,000 to color, its easy to see why this is regarded as a good investment when even the lowest budget Hollywood film costs many millions to produce and as many millions to promote "from scratch."

The profitability of colorization largely results from a radical reduction of labor costs in production. Not only is much of the process automated, but the workers employed in this business are poorly paid. Colorization has been characterized in the press as a booming cottage industry, and typically workers in cottage industries are subject to comparatively greater exploitation. The highest paid workers are the art directors and historic color researchers who decide what tints should be applied to the various elements in each scene. Their participation is critical in legal terms, evidence of the human authorship involved in colorization which makes the process eligible for copyright protection; yet the pay of this "creative" sector falls below the union scale of even the grips on current Hollywood productions. As for the majority of employees in the colorization business, they earn about the same pay as that of office employees working on video display terminals. In the Los Angeles area, entry level workers at one colorization lab make in the neighborhood of $6.50 per hour, and after a probationary period their earnings increase 25 percent. Management encourages employees to augment their base wage of approximately $8.00 per hour by periodically instituting bonuses for increased productivity.[12] As in all computer-based work, productivity is easily monitored—automatically recording how many frames have been colored, rather than how many characters have been typed—and the constant fact of surveillance adds to the physical stress of monotonous VDT work. Michael Balser, a Canadian videomaker and former employee of a colorization firm in Toronto, recalls that the pay scale and work conditions improved somewhat after the relatively skilled work force—composed largely of art school graduates—lodged numerous complaints, but these improvements were accompanied by intensified monitoring of each work station.[13]

Money also enters the picture in terms of estimates of reception, of market value. "The reason we're doing it is monetary," said Wilson Markle, president of Colorization, Inc., a Toronto-based firm specializing in the technique. "People don't like black and white. They do like color, and when we color it, they buy it."[14] Many such assertions about public taste are based on only the flimsiest evidence. A designer of one of the most sophisticated computer colorizing technologies, Barry Sandrew, claims that he first got interested in colorization and left his academic career at Harvard and his work as a designer of CAT scan technology when at home one day he "put on a colorized film. When I turned the color off, my four-year-old daughter got very upset. I realized then how big this thing could be."[15] If one four-year-old hardly constitutes a representative sample, most market research confirmed the overwhelming popular preference for color.

**Despite the starkness of the most famous New Deal documents, other government photographs indicate that even in the Great Depression not all black and white photographs were consumed "straight." This anonymous photograph produced under the auspices of the New Deal's National Youth Administration, circa 1939, bears the caption, "NYA girls applying delicate tints to pictures for use in Buffalo (N.Y.) schools."**

Courtesy National Archives

In demographic terms, black and white films on TV and in video stores no longer seem to cut it. If those of us who figure chronologically as baby-boomers grew up on the cusp between mass media in black and white and in color, the next generation was weaned exclusively on color, in the form of TV, films, snapshots, and most illustrated print media. Although newspapers resisted the color trend longest, not even newspapers today can be categorized as a monochrome hold-out, as an increasing number of major dailies use color very conspicuously in their bid for readers.

In the face of these trends, Turner and his corporate colleagues figured quite reasonably that to fully exploit their capital investment, they would need to enhance it with color in order to achieve maximum appeal with the all-important youth market and, just as crucial in terms of the economics of TV broadcasting, with advertisers. As one colorizing executive was quoted as saying, "The fact is that today's TV viewer only wants color.... More important, advertisers will not put color commercials in the middle of black-and-white shows. With colorized shows, Madison Avenue will once again accept these programs."[16]

There is some irony in the oft-repeated claim that advertisers will not touch black and white TV fare. During the last year, Madison Avenue has been responsible for reviving the codes of black and white, producing a significant number of either partially or totally monochrome ad campaigns. When produced by computer technology this technique is called "washing out," but neither the term nor the practice will become as widespread as colorizing, since existing copyright regulations have deemed it ineligible for copyright protection. Still, advertising for the moment seems to favor this technique for a number of reasons: in general, so long as the technique remains unconventional, it enables the ad to stand out from the constant stream of color programming; more specifically, present uses of black and white tend to invoke a nostalgic image of the past, or, when combined with shots of the commodity in color within an otherwise black and white scene, they serve to highlight the brand color and general desirability of the product.[17]

Whether color quantitatively has expanded audiences for film classics continues to be debated as sales trends of cassettes and broadcast ratings of repeated screenings remain the subject of ongoing market analysis. There is some indication that after the novelty of the colorized version wears off, the phenomenal increase in audience interest may decline, but there are other figures to suggest that even after the novelty wears off, the current audience for the colorized version remains four to 10 times greater.[18] Some TV station managers assert that the ratings potential of colorized films is overrated, but they remain an outspoken minority. Syndicators seem to have convinced their TV station customers that the colorized version has a better chance of doing well, since they have succeeded in charging high premiums for the colorized versions.[19]



On the other hand, there are those who argue that the horse-cart relation between syndicators and stations is actually reversed. Earl Glick, chairman of the L.A.-based Hal Roach Studios, recalled the frustrating negotiations with stations which led his company to invest in colorization technology: "Every time we went to sell something to them, they'd say, 'This is only worth so much because it's black and white.' So we thought...if these pictures were in color, they'd command a much bigger price."[20] But it may be impossible and even misguided to try to credit or blame a single source for this trend. Statistical assessments of the popularity of colorized films vary considerably, and few of the reports of ratings even attempt to factor in what any broadcast of a colorized or black and white film was competing against. Clearly, the market trend is based as much on beliefs about what the public or advertisers or station managers want as on anything else.

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Questions of quality are subject to as much dispute as the quantitative response to colorization. In the early 1980s the first attempts at colorization were viewed as technological novelties that were too crude to pose a serious threat to the filmic canon. But by the end of the 1980s, the process had been used to transform and renew copyrights of such classics as *Adam's Rib*, *Casablanca*, and *Dark Victory*. Moreover, the technique had improved sufficiently that even Turner conceded that the first colorized movies looked like badly painted Christmas trees.[21] There continues to be much disagreement in the assessment of how crude or skillful the process is, but as with many computer processes the technology is being constantly refined. And even the staunchest critics acknowledge that the present process is far less crude, before going on to argue that that is not the point. Indeed, critical outrage seems to intensify as the application of color becomes more sophisticated and unobtrusive.

What are the various points being contested, and who is involved in the public debate? The sheer extent of discussion has been remarkable. I have no absolute measure, but in L.A., at any rate, media coverage of colorization seems to dwarf recent debate and protest on such crucial topics as foreign policy in Central America, South Africa, and the Middle East, although probably not the the more geographically immediate issue of homelessness. This media coverage was fueled, in large measure, by the publicity and lobbying efforts of the Directors Guild of America, who spent the—for them—unprecedented sum of a half-million dollars to combat colorization. They also got a lot of bang for their bucks by enlisting on their side as active amateur lobbyists such stars as James Stewart and Lauren Bacall along with equally famous directors. John Huston, Frank Capra, Steven Spielberg, and Woody Allen were just a few of the directors who either sent messages to Washington or traveled to the capital to testify and socialize with members of Congress, their staffs, and the Washington press corps. It was to be expected that the press went as gaga for these media celebrities as it had for Reagan.

Faced with this media blitz, the very powerful Motion Picture Association of America claimed to be at a disadvantage. MPAA president Jack Valenti tried to garner sympathy when he publicly confessed: "I was sick of looking like I was opposing Jimmy Stewart. I love Jimmy Stewart. I didn't feel comfortable. I felt ungainly, ill at ease." And then, with a little more patriarchal authority: "The fight over colorization is 'a family quarrel.' It's totally inappropriate for people in our industry to quarrel in public."[22] While the producers felt handicapped opposing their own stars in public, they hardly gave up the fight, choosing to exercise clout a bit more discreetly in response to the legislative campaign that had been launched to stop colorization.

Already the question of artists' rights had entered legislative debates after 1986, when President Reagan urged Congress to pass the necessary legislation for the U.S. to become a signatory to the international Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works. First formed in 1886, the international copyright treaty was revised in 1928 to include provisions safeguarding certain moral rights of authors. The concept of moral rights not only entitles authors to proper credit as well as compensation for their work, it also entitles them to prohibit modifications of their works which would demean their reputation.

Despite the fact that the contract-based U. S. Copyright law makes no provision for either the "right of attribution" or the "right of integrity," there is a clear economic imperative for making adherence to the Berne Convention part of federal law. Robert C. Harris has summarized two basic reasons for current U.S. interest in the international treaty: "First, the U.S. would gain copyright relations with 24 countries that adhere to Berne...and with whom the U.S. has no direct or clear copyright relationship. Second, as one of the world's great disseminators of intellectual property and with rapid advances in information technologies, the U.S. has faced increasing problems policing infringement of the works of its authors and its creators in many areas throughout the world. It is believed that adherence to Berne, considered to be the preeminent copyright treaty, would enhance our credibility in dealing with foreign governments and obtaining their assistance in respecting and enforcing intellectual property rights."[23] Thus, ratification of the Berne Convention presented owners of U. S. copyright with a trade-off between gaining greater international copyright protection and possibly conceding certain rights of paternity and integrity to authors.

Aside from the Berne Convention, the two other relevant pieces of legislation recently considered by Congress were the Gephardt Film Integrity Act and the Mrazek-Yates National Film Preservation Act. Gephardt's bill came closest to enacting moral rights by proposing that artists be granted a veto against alteration of their work. The Gephardt bill died in committee. We should recall that Richard Gephardt in the period 1987-88 was running for the Democratic presidential nomination, and Hollywood producers, who are major sources of money for liberal Democratic contenders, must have communicated to him that he could expect little financial support if he continued to back a bill which complicated the present producers' absolute rights over works for which they had contracted.

Instead, the Mrazek-Yates bill, containing the predictable compromise, gained passage in November 1988. It completely sidestepped the issue of artist's moral rights and offered very limited protections on behalf of the consumer. The bill established the National Film Preservation Act of 1988, setting aside $250,000 to create a National Film Registry based in the Library of Congress and overseen by a board composed of 13 representatives of the film industry and academic community. This board has the power to name 25 films each year for the next three years (no film would be eligible for nomination unless it had been released for theatrical distribution at least 10 years ago).

The resulting 75 films designated as part of the national heritage will enjoy certain minimal protections. The original Yates bill not only set aside twice the amount of money to establish the National Film Registry, it also proposed that one would have to apply for permission to colorize any designated film, and that any colorized product could only be distributed under another name. In other words, had the original Yates bill gained passage, a colorized version of any one of this protected species of film would not have been able to benefit from the celebrity of the earlier work.

However, as the Mrazek-Yates bill was ultimately hammered out in



**Although the colorization of classic Hollywood movies has been vociferously protested by prominent directors and actors, other modes of alteration of films shown on TV have proceeded without such opposition. A letter to the *New York Times*, for instance, mentions a curious example where, in a broadcast of the Mel Brooks comedy *Blazing Saddles*, "every curse word was meticulously removed but each (use of) 'nigger' was retained."**

Courtesy International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House

compromise, the 75 films on the registry would not be so strictly protected. They simply would be designated by "a seal to indicate that the film has been included in the National Film Registry as an enduring part of our national cultural heritage."[24] Although the legislation proposed that "such [a] seal may then be used in the promotion of any version of such film that has not been materially altered," it is debatable whether such a seal would help advertise the film to the general public. As a nation, we tend to prefer mass media linked to commerce than to either high or legislated culture.

Along with dispensing a federal seal of approval to 75 films, the bill offers one other form of limited protection. This select group of films would have to carry labeling alerting the viewer if either colorization or alteration had adulterated the original film version. "Colorization," as defined in this law, means any kind of color added without the participation of the director, screenwriter, or other principal creators of the original film. "Material alteration" covers "fundamental post-production" editing changes, but the definition is actually quite loose. A clause at the end of the bill specifies that material alteration "does not include changes made in accordance with customary practices and standards and reasonable requirements of preparing a work for distribution or broadcast." Expressly excluded from the legal definition of material alterations are "practices such as the insertion of commercials and public service announcements for television broadcast." Thus, the oldest and most established forms of adapting film for mainstream commercial TV were left unchallenged.

Under this law, then, all that would be required of a producer of a colorized version of the select number of registered classic films is the addition of a label at the beginning of a broadcast or on the videocassette package. The size of the label is not stated. It could therefore be as insignificant in size as that of the Surgeon General's warning on cigarette packages and ads. And the stipulated penalties are minimal, requiring that illegal practices be remedied with labeling and, if not remedied, potentially liable to a fine not to exceed $10,000. Big deal.

So colorization has hardly been quashed, and many of the fundamental ways that film has been adapted to television recycling are hardly altered. Moreover, Congress ratified the Berne Treaty without making any provision for artists' rights. This Congress accomplished by adopting a "minimalist approach," making only those changes absolutely required to join the Convention. Since Congress concluded after two years of hearings that "the totality of existing U.S. law...satisfied our obligations under the Convention to accord moral rights,"[25] American producers now enjoy greater protections against international piracy without having to give anything up to artists.

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But the issue is not that so little changed after so many well-publicized hearings. The public debates may have been aired principally for ritual purposes, but that is no reason to dismiss their significance as ritual. We need to consider what symbolic issues were served by these debates. In particular, we might question why the rituals seem to be obsessed with colorization as the most critical and alarming type of alteration. Because we should keep in mind that if colorization figures as the most recent and high-tech type of corporate appropriation, adulteration of filmic works is hardly new or confined to questions of tint, shade, and hue.

This point is most ably documented in a *New York Times* letter written by an obviously knowledgeable viewer of first-run films and their TV replay versions: "I am astonished by the furor over the colorization of classic films," writes Karen Greene.

> While there is certainly tremendous merit on the side of the argument that since the director chose to work in black and white even when the color technology was available, the artist's intent has long been ignored when films are shown on network television. Even when stations flash the "edited for television" line across the screen, one never knows what has been done to the movie. Typically, four types of sacrilege occur on a regular basis: 1) cutting the movie during key scenes for the insertion of commercials; 2) cutting out scenes to make the film fit a certain time slot; 3) censoring a movie because of violent or sexual scenes, or because of "questionable" language (frequently done by overdubbing noise or other words), and 4) adding scenes to pad the length of a film.

Cutting for commercials, this writer observes, is ubiquitous and reportedly essential to the nature of network television. (She fails to point out that in many other countries, TV advertising is restricted to the front and back of the film.) Although Greene accepts the necessity of commercial interruptions, she draws the line at certain types of interruptions: "[I]n a recent airing of *Inherit the Wind*, commercials were inserted mid-sentence, not during natural breaks in the action." She finds certain excisions and insertions in recent TV broadcasts of classic films equally uncalled-for, such as the addition of a totally new character in *Two for the Road*. Her catalogue of everyday media alterations ends with "an interesting example of the censor's sensibilities in sanitizing *Blazing Saddles* [where] every curse word was meticulously removed but each [use of] 'nigger' was retained." On this basis she concludes, "Not every movie belongs on network television, especially when it must be significantly altered to fit the medium. Given the above distortion, merely adding color seems to be a mild insult to the artist's intent."[26]

The objections raised by Greene are fairly moderate, and they are well taken. They also return us to the question, why the fuss about colorization? In what way did it seem to threaten the cultural legacy more than these other practices? As in many public debates, the quality of the argument has tended to be sloppy and opportunistic on both sides, although not without comic interest. Champions of colorization argued quite predictably that mass marketing of these new color versions will at least ensure that the works will remain in circulation and be accessible to a new generation; moreover, those who found the change objectionable could either restrict their viewing to special screenings in film archives or turn the color off on their TV sets.

Ardent opponents of this kind of debasement of the film canon like *New York Times* film critic Vincent Canby argued that video distribution had already killed the 16mm market, which previously ensured that original



**In contast with prevailing attitudes among directors, Jean-Luc Godard has agreed to the colorization of his 1959 *nouvelle vague* landmark *Breathless*, starring Jean-Paul Belmondo and Jean Seberg. Under the tenets of French copyright law, however, the work cannot be colorized without the approval of others who worked on the film and are vested with moral rights in the work.**

Courtesy IMP/GEH

uncut versions would be accessible. Canby also took issue with the idea that the new generation exposed to a colorized version could justly claim familiarity with the classic.[27] Surprisingly, neither Canby nor fellow advocates of the sanctity of these classics took issue with the proposition that if you turned the color off on your set, you would actually see the equivalent of the original black and white version, even though the original monochrome tonal scale would have been greatly altered in the process of adding color.

Producers sounded just as high-handed in their responses to the passage of the barely restrictive Mrazek-Yates bill setting up the National Film Preservation Board. Roger L. Mayer, president of Turner Entertainment, went on record protesting that the film board "would inject unnecessary government intrusion in the creative process. You would have a group deciding which films qualify as classics. A classic," he continued in pious tones, "is not something that can be decided by a majority vote."[28] His point has merit, although it is less defensible coming from the very same source who previously justified the practice of colorization in terms of demographics.

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On the other side, Woody Allen seemed to have suffered his own brand of amnesia when he self-righteously testified to a Congressional committee in support of the Gephardt Bill, testimony which was then reprinted on the oped page of the *New York Times*: "Allowing the colorization of films (against the wishes of the director) is a good example of our country's regard for its artists, and why I think the issue of moral rights requires legislative help and protection. The recent Federal copyright decisions says that if a human being uses a certain minimum amount of creativity in coloring a black and white film, the new color version is a separate work that can be copyrighted." After plugging again both the Gephardt bill and the moral rights of artists, he concluded, "It is, after all, a very short step to removing the score from 'Gone with the Wind' and replacing it with a rock score under the mistaken notion that it will render it more enjoyable to young people."[29]

Allen ended on a note that threatened to deconstruct his argument, although again nobody seemed to notice. At an earlier stage of his career, before he had *arrived*, it was the very same Woody who appropriated a racy Japanese thriller, replaced the original soundtrack with his own dubbed dialogue, and then released it as his own film, *What's Up, Tiger Lily?*. But this, after all, was low Japanese culture, at a time when few Americans viewed Japan as a serious threat to our economy or our culture.

Inadvertently, Allen raised the question of whether "moral rights" might not be a convenient rallying cry by which a small number of directors—overwhelming white and male—defend their positions of relative power and privilege within mass media. More recently, the Directors Guild made clear that it would never permit the struggle for moral rights to lead to a democratization of the production process. When the U.S. Copyright Office reported its recommendations to the House Judiciary Committee on future legislation regulating technological alterations to motion pictures, it concluded that "if Congress is persuaded that it should vest directors and screenwriters with increased moral rights, then Congress should also include the other creators in the list of beneficiaries." (In another passage, the summary of the report lists cinematographers, art directors, and editors as some of the other creators.)[30] While the Directors Guild welcomed the general gist of the report, it also promised to fight any extension of the privileged category of filmic author: "[The Copyright people] don't understand enough about pictures, they don't understand the process, so they say, 'Let's give it to everybody.' We'll resolve that sort of thing in hearings," insisted Elliott Silverstein, head of the Directors Guild lobbying committee.[31]

Allen's testimony was revealing on other counts as well. Although he concluded his commentary by invoking the future audio alterations which could be made to such mainstream classics as *Gone with the Wind*, earlier he took pains to explain why colorization in particular mobilized the auteurs and their friends. Anticipating the question, why were directors not up in arms about cutting films for TV or breaking them up for commercials, Allen observed, "[D]irectors always hated these assaults but were powerless to stop them.... [T]o do battle," he noted, presumably with much angst in his voice, "is an overwhelmingly time-consuming and pessimistic prospect. However," he went on to argue, "[t]he outrage of seeing one's work transformed into color is so dramatically appalling, so 'obvious'—as against stopping sporadically for commercials—that this time all the directors chose to fight."[32]

Given the heights of emotion that the colorization of film has provoked, I find it remarkable that public debate has been so neatly confined to film. We should not for that reason assume, however, that there have been no parallel attempts in related mass media to recycle dated works by means of adding color. Actually, the success of colorization has already produced a chromatic spill into the realm of television. The purveyors of computer color technology have already set their sights on some of the old war horses of TV serials. *Wanted: Dead or Alive* in color is a *fait accompli*. Turner Entertainment has already begun colorizing all the pre-color episodes of *Gilligan's Island* and is seriously contemplating a makeover of *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* and *Doctor Kildare*. Coca-Cola Telecommunications (formerly Columbia) is colorizing *Tightrope*, a 1950s police series. While TV serial lovers have not yet sounded alarm that their favorite programs have been defaced, debased, or mutilated (terms frequently used to protest filmic alteration), at least one star of an old serial, Mike Connors of *Tightrope*, expressed mixed feelings. He wanted to reserve judgment until he had seen the new version, but he was concerned that colorization would undercut the "moody show, dealing with a man who goes undercover to expose the seamy side of urban life.... Color may take away some of the seediness. Westerns, musicals and comedies can probably be helped by color. But tougher dramatic shows like *Tightrope* could conceivably be hurt."[33]

In somewhat different ways, the owners of old TV shows apply their own discriminating criteria. Again, Roger Mayer of Turner Entertainment provided telling commentary: "Adding color doesn't make every old series into a valuable commodity.... Some shows, like *I Love Lucy*, seem to have an unlimited life, but there are some series we own that just aren't classic enough to colorize."[34] Thus "classic" is redefined in this context as that which has sufficient residual value to merit recycling in revamped tints.

In comparison with film, TV seems less pure, more subject to a variety of contingencies, which makes the addition of color merely another commercial intervention in a medium shaped baldly by commercial exigencies.

But that still does not address why vocal defenders of the integrity of filmic work seem especially sensitive to the threat of colorization as compared to other forms of alteration. Particularly in psychoanalytic terms, this reaction should seem puzzling, at least initially, since cutting after all is most analogous to the fearful act of castration. But what we witness today is less the horror at the prospect of the cut, of subtraction, but the horror at the prospect of addition.

Color, however, does not represent simply a form of addition, but rather a quite special form of contamination. In view of color's traditional association with makeup, with purely cosmetic forms of rejuvenation, color poses the distinct threat of feminization, a form of masquerade which simultaneously acknowledges both insufficiency and desire.

By ending on gender, I do not mean to discount the powerful economic tensions which any new technology exploits and magnifies. Nor should we overlook the generational differences which colorization exemplifies and obliterates. But gender in this instance adds a special twist, though it is sometimes concealed in generational terms. I am thinking particularly of a recent *New Yorker* cartoon by Edward Frascino, depicting a cozy living room scene with daughter and mother perched on a couch before a large TV set whose screen is invisible from our line of sight. The daughter turns to the mother who seems captivated by the program, and the caption reads, "Why does she want to go back to Kansas where everything is in black-and-white?"[35] The cartoon refers not only to colorization and the mixed media format used in the *Wizard of Oz* film narrative, but to the *New Yorker* as well. Indirectly, the caption comments on the magazine's new management that has visibly eroded the weekly's long-standing traditions, including the signature graphic style of quaintly archaic, monochrome drawings as the exclusive form of editorial illustration. As amusing as the cartoon is, however, the gulf of incomprehension would have been greater if the male cartoonist had represented tradition as the figure of the father. Displacing tradition onto the figure of the mother could be construed as Franscino's way of generalizing and diffusing his own sense of loss.

That color should be an especially bitter pill for male artists to swallow is underscored by the shock waves generated by the news that French filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard was considering allowing *Breathless* to be colorized. On first hearing a rumor to this effect, I was incredulous, ready to dismiss the story as a media joke. When a colorization executive I spoke with confirmed the report,[36] the shock of the news made sense in another way—the exception that proved the rule.

On further reflection, such consensual appropriation seemed consistent with some of the abiding themes and fascinations in Godard's work. Of all the New Wave auteurs, Godard sustained the most serious dialogue with commercial culture, its symbols, and its forms. Moreover, if the alienated male figure as revolutionary or artist serves as one recurrent figure in his work, just as compelling is the recurrent figure of the female prostitute. Of course, his work would have offered a far more radical challenge if it had completely interwoven these themes and produced a male prostitute figure. Yet, while still conventionally gendered, Godard's image of prostitution is rooted in materialism, thereby resisting the most obvious forms of sentimentalization. Prostitution, in Godard's work, is the site where contract relations and desire interact nakedly and colorfully—as if there is no difference between color and nakedness, between surface and essence, in a commercial culture.

## Notes

1. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (New York, Hill and Wang, 1981), p. 81.

2. Norman Sklarewitz, "From Black and White to Color," *American Way*, November 1, 1986, p. 44.

3. Stephen Farber, "The Man Hollywood Loves to Hate," *Los Angeles Times Magazine*, April 30, 1989, p. 11.

4. *Ibid.*; Earnest Elmo Calkins, "Beauty the New Business Tool," *Atlantic Monthly*, August 1927, p. 145.

5. Jack Mathews, "Colorization: Beginning to See Implications as Time Goes By," *Los Angeles Times*, San Diego edition, November 9, 1988, VI:11.

6. Buddy Young, president, Color Systems Technology, Inc., quoted in David Crook, "Color New 34th St. Miracle of Technology," *Los Angeles Times*, November 23, 1985, VI:1.

7. Penny Pagano, "Ruling on Colorizing a Blow to Directors," *Los Angeles Times*, June 20, 1987, VI:1, 5.

8. Ralph Oman, "Black and White and Red All Over," *New York Times*, June 24, 1987, A:27.

9. Pagano, *op. cit.*, VI:5.

10. Oman, *op. cit.*

11. Leslie Bennetts, "'Colorizing' Film Classics: A Boon or a Bane?," *New York Times*, August 5, 1986, A:1.

12. From a telephone conversation with Joseph Adelman, senior vice president, Color Systems Technology, Inc., May 15, 1989.

13. From a telephone conversation with Michael Balser, Canadian videomaker and former colorization employee in Toronto, May 11, 1989.

14. Bennetts, *op. cit.*

15. Barry Sandrew, quoted in Mathews, *op. cit.*

16. Charles Powell of Color Systems Technology, Inc., quoted in Stephen Farber, "Will Colorizing Revitalize Old TV Series?," *New York Times*, June 7, 1987, II:35.

17. Bernice Kanner, "Standouts," *New York Magazine*, October 10, 1988, p. 22.

18. For various and somewhat conflicting statistics, see Nina J. Easton, "Colorization Issue May Be Decided by Committee Today," *Los Angeles Times*, August 4, 1988, VI:12.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Bennetts, *op. cit.*

21. Farber, "The Man Hollywood Loves to Hate," *op. cit.*, p.13.

22. Easton, *op. cit.*

23. Robert C. Harris, "The Limits of Copyright: Moral Rights and the Berne Convention," *The Independent*, May 1988, p. 21.

24. The text of the National Film Preservation Board bill, H.R 4867, 100th Congress, 2nd Session, is reprinted in the *University Film and Video Association Newsletter*, Spring 1989.

25. The "minimalist approach" used by Congress to reconcile the Berne Convention with existing U.S. law is briefly discussed in "Executive Summary, Technological Alterations to Motion Pictures," *Report of the Register of Copyrights*, March 1989, p. 1; the full report of the U.S. Copyright Office is scheduled to be published by the G.P.O. in June 1989.

26. Karen Greene, *New York Times*, September 4, 1985, II:11, 30.

27. Vincent Canby, "'Colorization' is Defacing Black and White Film Classics," *New York Times*, November 2, 1986, II:1, 21.

28. Easton, *op. cit.*

29. Woody Allen, "The Colorization of Films Insults Artists and Society," *New York Times*, June 28, 1987, IV:25.

30. *Report of the Register of Copyrights*, *op cit.*, pp. 12, 5.

31. Jack Mathews, "Colorization Debate Takes on a New Hue," *Los Angeles Times*, April 16, 1989, VI:1, 9.

32. Allen, *op. cit.*

33. Farber, "Will Colorizing Revitalize Old TV Series?," *op. cit.*

34. *Ibid.*

35. Edward Frascino, *New Yorker*, January 2, 1989, p. 30.

36. According to Joseph Adelman, senior vice president, Color Systems Technology, Inc., Godard has tentatively agreed, but the colorization of *Breathless* cannot begin until approval is secured from a number of others who worked on the original film, since moral rights in France are vested in others in additon to the director; telephone conversation with Adelman, May 15, 1989. See also, "Director 'Breathless' Over Colorizing Classic," *Multichannel News*, February 20, 1989, p. 69.

For various types of research, editorial, and graphics assistance on this essay, I am indebted to JoAnne Seador, George Legrady, and Allan Sekula.

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# FESPACO AFTER THE COUP: 1989 FESTIVAL OF PAN-AFRICAN CINEMA



**The grand prize of FESPACO went to a Ghanian film by Kwan Ansah, *Heritage Africa*, which satirizes those who betray their African identity. Here Quincy Arthur Bosomfield receives the family heirloom from his mother.**

Courtesy filmmaker

Teshome H. Gabriel

Fifteen minutes after touching down at the airport in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, the visitor passes by what appears to be a huge abstract tower of assorted film cans, reels, magnetic tapes, spindles, and other paraphernalia. This Monument des Cineastes is at once a homage to African filmmakers and a center in a town where there is otherwise none. The monument serves not only as a cultural focus but also as a historical symbol in that it is situated at a crossroads where avenues Gamal Abdel Nasser, Nelson Mandela, M. R. Thevenoud, Rue Patrice Lumumba, and Rue du Marche all meet.

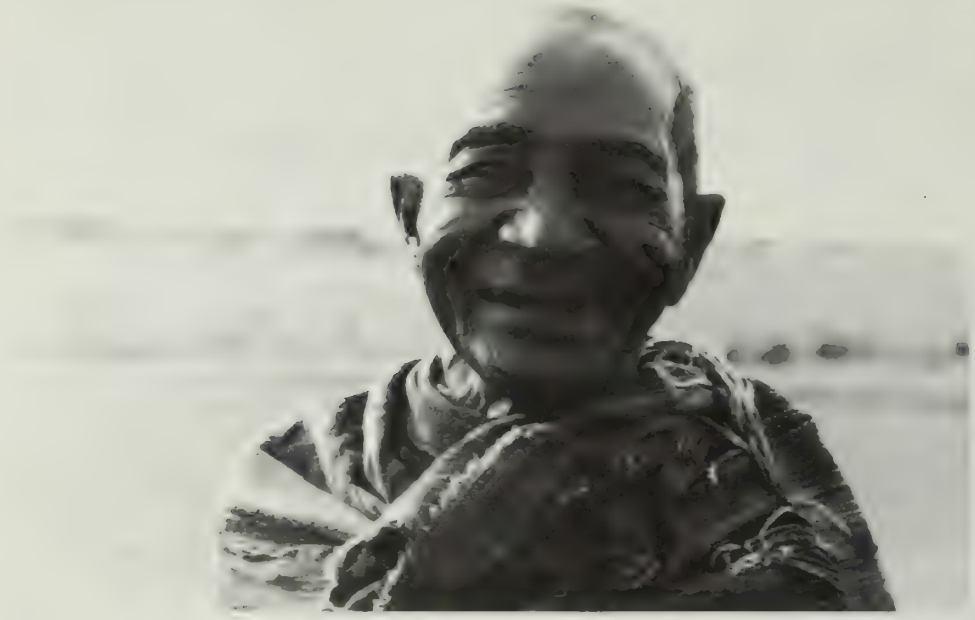
Burkina Faso's (formerly Upper Volta) main claim to fame nowadays is its biannual role as the host of the most important Pan-African film festival in the world, the Festival of Pan-African Cinema, known more commonly by its acronym FESPACO. The festival, which in early March marked its twentieth anniversary, alternates each year with the Carthage Film Festival in Tunisia. Of the two events, FESPACO is more directly concerned with the films of Black Africa. Its dedication and enthusiasm for African cinema clearly permeates all aspects of the cultural life of the capital city, Ouagadougou. Sprawling on all sides of the monument stand make-shift souvenir shops displaying all sorts of African art and crafts, and around town banners greet visitors with such exhortations as "No people should go hungry for their own image."

From its modest beginnings in 1969 with five African states and 10,000 participants, the festival has grown to include the whole continent of Africa and an attendance of over half a million people. More than 20 international organizations now actively support the festival, ranging from UNICEF (an award for children's films) and Mobil Oil to the International Catholic Organization for cinema and the French Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation. As Filippe Sawadogo, the secretary-general of the festival states, "When a small group of African cineastes organized the first African Cinema Week in Ouagadougou in 1969, they did not imagine that they were laying the foundation for what would become a festival of international significance and the most important cultural event in the African continent."

The inaugural screening at the new palatial theater of Ousmane Sembene's new film *Thiaroye's Camp* effectively opened FESPACO this year. Sembene's film (codirected with Thierno Sow), a dramatic depiction of the excesses of French racism, essentially restates in a more spectacular form many of the director's familiar themes of colonial brutality. Though out of competition at FESPACO, this film won the newly created and prestigious Institute for Black Peoples Award. This institute was launched in Ouagadougou in 1986 as a rallying point for the research community and for international cultural exchange and cooperation.

This year's festival included an international market for African films and television programs, a children's film festival, and a sidebar tribute to Latin American cinema. In all, 79 films were screened. Again and again the central themes in these works were quite distinct from what one comes to expect from Hollywood films and their approach to sex, violence, and cultural stereotypes. In African cinema the aged are seen neither as marginal nor as invisible but as treasured repositories of popular memory. Children are not depicted in a patronizing manner but as the bearers of hope for the future. Women are seen not as objects of sexual desire but as guardians of history and culture. These characteristics were best embodied in the Burkina Faso entry, *Yaaba* ("grandmother" in Mooré), by Idrissa Ouedraogo, which was given the Special Jury Award as well as second prize by the Organization for African Unity.

With films such as this in mind, it is possible to say that a distinct and alternative aesthetic is emerging. The films of FESPACO clearly represent a unique form of cinema, one that is not merely a medium for entertainment nor merely an artistic manipulation of sound and image, but rather the clear articulation of the memories,



**In Idrissa Ouegrago's *Yaaba* (*Grandmother*), women such as the lead character are shown to be the guardians of history and culture.**

Courtesy Arcadia Films

thoughts, and aspirations of the African world. While other cinemas tend to drive relentlessly toward a resolution of the story, African films tend to emphasize the process of the meaning of the tale. While dominant cinematic practices are marked by the subordination of space to time, the African films tended to emphasize the social space without strict temporal restraints. Consequently, while conventional cinemas carve up the social space into the personal preserve of the individual, African films maintain it through the communal hero. In other words, in the African context, the hero or heroine is simply replaced by heroic deeds.

The grand prize of the festival, the Etalon de Yennenga (Gold Stallion), went to a Ghanaian film, Kwaw Ansah's *Heritage Africa*, which satirizes those who betray their African identity and cultural heritage. The story deals with the theme of collaboration between a Ghanaian district commissioner (a rarity in colonial times) and his British "counterparts." The identity problems of the Western-style "hero" are symbolized by his switching from his African name of Kwesi Atta Bosomefi (which literally means "this Sunday, the twin of an illustrious ancestor has been reborn") to his newly Anglicized identity as Quincy Arthur Bosomfield. With twitching nostrils and pencil-thin moustache he becomes hilariously British. By the end, however, through the influence of his mother (symbolically, Africa) and her gift of the *kuduo*, an ancestral heirloom, he is forcibly reminded of his identity and finally reintegrated into his folk culture.

This year not only marked the first time a Ghanaian film has won the top prize, but also the first time an Anglophone film has won. The film also went on to pick up top honors in acting for Koffi Bunor who played Bosomefi/Bosomfield. The award for top actress went to Bia Gomes from Guinea-Bissau, who plays Dominga in Flora Gomes' first feature film, *Mortu Nega*. This award was particularly significant in that Gomes does not evoke the sort of glamour typical of the Hollywood actress. Rather, she represents a woman from the guerilla era of African liberation who also serves as a model for the future African woman.

This year's other main contender for the top award was Gaston Kabore's *Zan Boko* from Burkina Faso, which was the public's favorite and was awarded best screenplay and the Mobil Oil Award for "authenticity." The film's title refers to the custom in much of rural Africa of burying the mother's placenta in the earth immediately after giving birth, in order to anchor the child's identity in family, land, and history. *Zan boko*, in common usage, is an expression of the concept of "roots" and "identity."

*Testament*, by John Akomfrah, a Ghanaian resident in Britain, received special mention for the high quality of its soundtrack. The film, quite appropriately subtitled as "war zone of memories," is simultaneously a discourse on exile as well as a visual recitation of the agonies of memory.

The strongest of the films from North (Arab) Africa was the Algerian entry *The Silent Door*, by Ammar Laski, which dramatizes the power of popular memory when villagers add a new name to a monument to famous martyrs and none of the government's officials has the slightest idea of his identity. Who is he? He is Ammar, the deaf-mute folk hero of the Algerian war of independence.

Among the other entries of particular interest this year were *Apalara* and *Maitatsine*, from Nigeria, which presented contrasting approaches to religious fundamentalism in that country. While the former is a plea for religious tolerance among Christians, Moslems, and traditionalists, the latter, which is based on actual events in the ancient city of Kano (Nigeria) in 1980, is an attack on the kind of religious fanaticism practiced by the sect of Maitatsine.

The festival also presented the prestigious Paul Robeson award, given in memory of the famous actor whose struggle on behalf of Africa's peoples is always awarded to a film from the African diaspora. Again for the first time this award went to a Brazilian film, *Ori*, ("head" or "Black consciousness"), directed by Rachel Gerber. The film traces the features of an African identity in the lives and struggles of Brazilian people.

Mention must also be made of two Afro-British entries in this category: D. Elmina Davis' beautifully crafted first feature, *Rastafari Woman*, on women of the movement as they see themselves, and Menelik Shabazz' *Time and Judgement*, a celebration of pan-African identity played out in poetry, song, music, and dance. These works are adamantly uncompromising in their identification with pan-African spiritual concerns.

Although cinema was certainly the focus of attraction at Ouagadougou, it would be wrong to come away feeling this was all the festival was about. For here was a sense of great pride, not solely in the cinematic achievements, but in the celebration of pan-African heritage and identity. The collaborative effort of all involved gave the sense of a true community and spirit of support. No matter where they came from all the participants were made to feel very much a part of this communal family.

For a country of only eight million people in an area the size of Colorado with very limited resources, the dedication and enthusiasm for the festival raises an obvious question: Why choose cinema to express a pan-African identity? The answer can be found in the myriad needs and desires of the African people to (re)define Africa itself. Like everyone else, Africans grow concerned when their self-image is distorted in the rest of the world. Nowadays, however, they seem to be much more concerned with redefining their identity *for themselves*. They are putting themselves back into the history which the empires of the West once eliminated them from.

Judging by the high standard of the films at FESPACO this year, African filmmakers are becoming more introspective and much less worried with how the world image markets presents their culture and history. This strong concern with self-image is not a frivolous one. It is the

belated flowering of what African historians, writers, filmmakers, and artists have felt and have been working toward all along.

The huge success of this year's festival was especially meaningful due to recent political turmoil in Burkina Faso. President Thomas Sankara, who had been a vastly popular leader and great friend of African cinema while he was head of state, was assassinated in 1987, shortly after the last FESPACO. At that time, his death was both a shock and a threat to the future of the federation which sponsors the festival. Sankara was undoubtedly the guiding force behind the festival, propelling it to international prominence. Happily, the current president, Blaise Compaoré, appears to recognize the political, cultural, and popular importance of the event. He announced immediately that the festival would continue. He went even further by unveiling a new film theater to demonstrate his continued commitment to the festival. This act not only saved FESPACO but, according to some observers, saved his government as well.

What we learn from African cinema is not simply that we must change the things we look at but our very way of looking. If the ideal is to image Africa—Africa as clusters of symbols, histories and cultures—then FESPACO is the only organization in the world that brings together all African nationalities and language groups with a common concern about the liberation of the image. To this end, FESPACO 1989 must be recognized as an oracle—explaining what Africa has always been, but has never been seen as. This year's festival confirmed beyond all doubt that Africa is not simply a backdrop of brilliant landscapes, nor any filmmaker's exotic Otherland, but rather a continent where different histories and struggles combine to project an identity by which collective memory serves as a gateway to the future.

*Teshome H. Gabriel is associate professor in the Department of Film/TV at the University of California, Los Angeles, and author of* Third Cinema in the Third World: The Aesthetics of Liberation. *He served as a member of the jury for FESPACO 1989.*

## FIVF TAPE LIBRARY

The FIVF Festival Bureau has established a tape library of members' current works to expedite screenings for upcoming film and video festivals. Members interested in depositing their work in the library should contact: Kathryn Bowser, Festival Bureau director, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012, (212) 473-3400. 1/2" and 3/4" tapes will be accepted.


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# MIXED MEDIA: 1989 ASIAN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL VIDEO FESTIVAL



**Chinese seamstresses in Boston embark on a city-wide fight for job-retraining and placement in *Through Strength and Struggle*, one of the 33 works in this year's Asian American International Video Festival.**

Courtesy Asian CineVision

Lisa R. Rhodes

Despite the fact that the seventh Asian American International Video Festival (AAIVF) opened on a gray Friday evening, organizers say the annual festival, held April 7-9 this year at the Millennium Film Workshop in New York City's East Village, was the most successful ever. Sponsored by Asian CineVision (ACV), a New York-based media arts group, the showcase for Asian and Asian American video art featured 33 works—almost double the number shown last year—and attracted some 900 viewers from the Asian American and larger community as well.

"In terms of video entries and the people who attended the festival, on the whole the response was very positive," says Marlina Gonzalez, exhibition director at ACV. "Maybe we're on to something here." On to the dismantling of century-old media stereotypes of Asians and Asian Americans? Wider audience recognition of works by Asian and Asian American video artists? Perhaps. Since its creation in 1976, ACV has been concerned with images of various Asian ethnic groups in all forms of media and has also displayed the works of Asian and Asian American filmmakers and video artists.

Since the nonprofit group inaugurated AAIVF in 1982 (not to be confused with ACV's Asian American International Film Festival, established in 1977 to showcase 16mm and 35mm work) the aim has been to ease the double burden many Asian video artists often bear as "ethnic minorities" and as independents. Says Gonzalez, "We hope that by showcasing their talents we can create a frame around the works and show that these videos are just as prolific in interests and styles" as works by non-Asians. The festival is a noncompetitive forum open to established and emerging Asian and Asian American video artists. There are no restrictions on video length, subject matter, or genre. However, the festival is divided into two major categories: experimental/installation and documentary/narrative works.

This year the festival featured nine thematic programs and included works ranging from an animated narrative to a music/video documentary. *Plage Concrete*, the first video piece by multimedia artist Ping Chong, opened the festival. Originally conceived as part of a site-specific installation at three locations, Chong says the video's cinematography mimics the way humans perceive the world. "It is a personal meditation on the evolution of human history," Chong explained amidst a gathering audience sipping and nibbling wine and cheese. "One of the things I've always been interested in is the archaeology of human history." In *Plage Concrete*, ordinary structure and institutions first appear as fragments. Then the camera slowly zooms out presenting them as whole images in a larger context.

Chong, an established performance artist, was one of 22 Asian American artists featured in the festival. Gonzalez says this year AAIVF included a more diverse range of Asian national groups. For example, there were four entries from the Philippines, three from Canada, two from Japan, and one each from Korea and China. "I hope that this pattern continues," she says, adding that many Asian videomakers outside the U.S. often are "not sure if we will accept videos with non-Asian American topics."

Yet cultural diversity was one of the most important criterion for Celia Chong and Rea Tajiri, AAIVF's two guest curators. They say that for many Asian and Asian American video artists in the festival, personal issues such as cultural/racial identity, assimilation, and media stereotypes continue to be primary concerns, although a number of artists chose to handle the subjects in innovative ways. "I felt in order to be representative, I had to include as many ethnic groups as possible," says Chong, curator of the documentary/narrative section, which included one Can-Asian [Asian Canadian] and one Korean entry. "And there had to be a balance between cultural and politically-oriented pieces."

It seems Chong has the right idea. Gonzalez says that the program featuring the New York premiere of two Asian American documentary videos was one of the most popular festival segments. *Through Strength and Struggle*, a tape by the Asian American Resource Workshop and Helen Lin, dealt with the 18-month struggle of a group of Chinese women who worked as seamstresses at a Boston-based sportswear factory. When the factory suddenly closes, the women embark on a city-wide fight to win the legal right to job-retraining and placement. *Slaying the Dragon*, a documentary by Deborah Gee, examines the popular yet demeaning media images of Asian women, ranging from news anchorwoman Connie Chung to the dragon lady and geisha girl. "It was heartwarming to notice how they were received by the audience," says Gonzalez, adding that many audience members discussed the two videos after the screening.

Chong, who works on distribution of public television programs to foreign television stations, says these two tapes were of particular interest. "I'm most keen on videos about Asian women," she says, "and these were effective in breaking stereotypes." Chong believes that these works constitute "a good history lesson" for Asians and non-Asians: "They show women fighting back,

going against tradition—an image of Asian women that is not so prevalent."

"I tried to be very open-minded," says Tajiri, curator of the experimental/installation works. "I tried to let go of my prejudices, and I was particularly sensitive to artists who had not shown before." For example, *Neighborhood on the BPM 112*, an experimental color piece by first time AAIVFer Tohwa Tei, is a slick, stylish rap/home movie video that takes a tour of Tei's turf in New York City's upbeat East Village. Tajiri says experimental work loosely based on the music video format was the style she encountered most often. In addition, Tajiri, a video artist whose *Hitchcock Trilogy* (shown at last year's AAIVF) is featured in the 1989 Biennial at the Whitney Museum of American Art, says several veteran videomakers explored cultural issues using nontraditional avenues of expression. Shu Lea Cheang's *Color Schemes*, for example, focuses on a group of 12 literary and performance artists who discuss American history and racism inside a washing machine. And Art Nomura's *Wok Like a Man* shows how three Asian-American men are "stir-fried" into American culture, while a high-pitched falsetto sings a revamped version of the Four Season's hit "Walk Like a Man."

Gonzalez says these new approaches were also popular with the audience. As a matter of fact, *Color Schemes* was so well-received, Gonzalez says, the attendance was "more than a full house" and ACV staffers had to add 20 seats. Millennium provides seating for 75, but can hold up to 150. Gonzalez says the attendance averaged about 100 to 150 per program each day, thanks in part to passes that allowed viewers to see the entire festival for $15. "The passes are a good strategy to get nonconverts more interested," she observes, "and to measure the people who return more than once." In the past, Gonzalez points out, most festival viewers attended a minimum of three screenings.

This year's event left organizers hopeful about the festival's continued success and greater opportunities for Asian and Asian American video artists. "I'm very optimistic," says Chong, adding that although the dearth of funding will always be a problem, there is now a path for others to follow. "The more work I see, the more I'm convinced that we now have great examples, great mentors and a supportive community." Tajiri agrees: "A lot of artists are experimenting with footage, video technology, and special effects. They will continue to have exposure; you have to keep up the profile."

According to Gonzalez, an AAIVF retrospective in Taiwan and Hong Kong may take place in the future. Looking back, the festival seems to have come a long way. "I guess we can kind of give ourselves a pat on the back," says Gonzales with modesty. "But this can only continue if the support of the audience and community continues."

*Lisa R. Rhodes is a business writer who also writes frequently on the visual arts.*

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# IN BRIEF

This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the **FIVF Festival Bureau**. Listings do not constitute an endorsement & since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. If your experience differs from our account, please let us know so we can improve our reliability.

## Domestic

BLUE COYOTE FILM FESTIVAL, Dec. 3-8, NY. Debut of competitive fest for new short films, "created to allow gifted young filmmakers the opportunity to have their work seen & appreciated." All cats accept work in 2 groups: under 5 min. & 5-30 min.: narrative, animated, incl. computer generated (under 5 min. only), doc, experimental, music video (determined by song length), student. Fest will distribute compilation video nationally & work in conjunction w/ several cable networks to expedite TV exhibition. Cash &/or service &/or equipment prizes as well as a production grant offered to winners. Deadline: Sept. 15 (early submissions appreciated). Entries must be under 30 min. Entry fee: $35 ($30 student). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8 (preview on 3/4" & 1/2" only). Rough cuts accepted if film is finished by Oct. 15. Contact: Chris Arcudi/Bill Kent, Blue Coyote, 217 E. 85th St., Ste. 340, New York, NY 10028; (212) 439-1158.

CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 12-Nov. 2, IL. Deadline: July 15. One of oldest competitive film events in US, fest celebrates silver anniv. this yr. Entries must be completed in previous yr. Cats: feature, shown in official competition, out of competition (information), or special section (critic's choice, national cinema, etc.); documentary: arts/humanities, social/political, history/biography; short subject: drama, humor/satire, children's films, experimental, nonnarrative; TV production: talk shows, public affairs/political, feature films made for TV, educational, doc, variety/entertainment, children's, miniseries, news documentary, special events; student productions, in animation, documentary, short subject, experimental, educational; independent video: short subject, doc, educational, animation, feature, experimental, music video, other; TV commercial; educational films: performing/visual arts, natural sciences/mathematics, social sciences, humanities, recreation/sports, other; animation. Awards: Hugo (symbol of discovery); Gold Hugo (Grand Prix) presented in each major cat.; Silver Hugo (2nd place in each cat.); gold & silver plaques, certificates of merit; 1st Feature Film Award, Illinois Awards (to IL filmmaker or video artist entered in feature, doc, short, student, video ed., or animation cats). Entry fees: $25-100. Contact: Chicago International Film Festival, 415 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, IL 60610-9990; tel: (312) 644-3400; fax: (312) 644-0784; telex: 936086 CHI FEST OGO.

CHICAGO LESBIAN AND GAY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct., IL. Now in 9th yr, fest is 1 of largest of its kind in US, bringing new lesbian & gay films & videos to Midwestern audiences. Entries of all lengths accepted in cats of independent features & shorts. No entry fee; entrant pays return shipping. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline Aug. 11. Held at Music Box Theatre, as well as Chicago Filmmakers' 200-seat theater. Contact: Chicago Filmmakers, 1229 W. Belmont, Chicago, IL 60657; (312) 281-8788; telex: 215026.

CINE COUNCIL ON NON THEATRICAL EVENTS DC CINE is nonprofit org. that selects films & videos for entry in int'l festivals & awards selected productions w/ Golden Eagle certificates in 2 annual film competitions. LastYr over 800 entries submitted & 330 productions chosen by 30 juries nationwide. Over 20 cats, incl. animation, arts & crafts, doc, education, entertainment, environment/nature, history, medicine, public health & sports. Entry fees: $75-125 & up, depending on length. Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: Richard Calkins, CINE, 1001 Connecticut Ave., NW, Ste. 1016, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 785-1136; fax: (202) 785-4114.

DENVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 12-19, CO. Over 100 programs from more than 20 countries annually presented in noncompetitive, invitational fest. New int'l feature releases, independently produced narrative films & docs, animation, experimental works & short subjects incl. in comprehensive program. Program also features tributes, galas, retros & seminars. Audiences number over 17,000 & dozens of filmmakers attend w/ work. Fest now in 12th yr. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. For film to be considered, send detailed descriptive info & fest will advise if sending print or cassette is appropriate. Deadline: Aug. 15. Contact: Ron Henderson, director, 999 18th St., Ste. 247, Denver, CO 80202; (303) 298-8223; telex: 710 1111 406.

GRASSROOTS VIDEO FESTIVAL, September, NY. Sponsored by Downtown Community Television Center, fest accepts tapes social, political & cultural in nature & community/grassroots in orientation. Selected entries cablecast & screened at DCTV. Include SASE for return. Formats: 3/4", 1/2", Beta, 8mm video. Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: DCTV, 87 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10013; attn: Grassroots Festival; (212) 966-4510.

INDEPENDENT FEATURE FILM MARKET, Oct. 3-13, NY. For 11 yrs IFP has sponsored this growing market for independent US narrative & doc features & limited number of foreign films, bringing together foreign & domestic buyers, distributors, programmers & fest reps with filmmakers. Over 400 reps from over 215 companies attended last yr's market. Screenings of new releases & works-in-progress presented, many world premieres. Most filmmakers represent own work in market. Entry cats: feature section for dramatic & documentary films over 75 min., (incl. limited number of English-language foreign features); works-in-progress for incomplete feature films in need of development money, pre-sales, or finishing funds; short fiction & nonfeature doc section for films & videos under 75 min. To enter, must be current member of IFP, IFP/Midwest, IFP/Northern California, or IFP/West (membership fees: $75 yr. individual, $200/yr. company). All entries previewed by market selection committee. IFP also sponsors concurrent workshops/seminars on independent filmmaking issues. Appl. forms & further info. avail. at IFP; call for fees & venues. Formats: feature film, 35mm, 16mm; video section, 3/4"; work-in-progress, 3/4". Deadline: Aug. 20. Contact: Karol Martesko, market dir., Independent Feature Project, 21 W. 86th St., New York, NY 10024; (212) 496-0909; fax: (212) 496-2129; telex: 238790 NYK.

TELLURIDE FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 1-4, CO. New discoveries & esoteric works hallmark this premiere US fest, also known as influential gathering place for film buffs & cinema professionals. Over 2000 spend Labor Day weekend in 9000-ft-high beauty of San Juan Mtns screening surprise array of best of new US independent & foreign films, most world premieres. Films not publicized in advance & fest relies on reputation for quality programming to attract sell-out crowd (tix usually sold-out by preceding July). Tributes, retros & seminars round out program. Fest now in 16th yr. Most features are invited selections, chosen at Cannes & through recommendations; check w/ fest about selection criteria, as unsolicited entries may be appropriate. Feature, documentary & short films of all lengths & subjects considered. Filmmakers should be present for screening of work. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact Stella Pence, Telluride Film Festival, National Film Preserve, Box B1156, Hanover, NH 03755; (603) 643-1255.

## Foreign

AUCKLAND INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FILM FSTIVAL, October, New Zealand. Social issue films are focus of fest, which accepts works by women in all genres & subjects: feature, documentary, experimental, animated, video. Particularly seeking out films from 3d World. Sponsored by Black Rose Prods., 10-yr-old nonprofit trust that programs community events oriented toward women's issues. Contact: Chrissy Duggan, prod./Liz DiFiore, assoc. prod., Box 47090, Ponsonby, Auckland, New Zealand; tel: (64) 09 459840.

BAHIA JORNADA DA CINEMA, Sept. 8-14, Brazil. Under theme "Por Um Mundo Mais Humano," fest in Salvador—which supports 3rd World films—focuses competitive section on Latin American film & video & African works in Portuguese completed in previous yr. Awards (Gold, Silver & Bronze Tatus) go to best feature (over 60 min.), medium-length (20-59 min.) & short (under 20 min.) films. Fiction, animated, experimental, videos of popular movements & long documentary films accepted. Special attn paid to ecological themes. Program incl. retrospectives, homages, symposia & debates. Fest offers hotel & hospitality to invited guests. Concurrent int'l market of ind. film & video features short & medium-length cultural films, feature-length documentaries & socio-cultural videos, particularly from 3d World countries but also open to alternative works from elsewhere. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; selection on 3/4" & 1/2" only. Deadline: July 30. Contact: XVIII Jornada Internacional de Cinema da Bahia, Rua Araújo Pinho (Canela) CEP 40.140, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil; tel: (071) 237-1429; telex: 71-2917.

FLORENCE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF INDEPENDENT CINEMA, Dec. 3-9, Italy. Newly completed US independent features form backbone of Italian fest, which shows panorama of about 15 works each yr to very enthusiastic local audiences. Celebrating 10th anniversary this yr, fest has history of showcasing classic innovative independent films; fest promises "special handling." Fest uses director Fiumi's patented Digitaly system for subtitling. Several distribs attended in the past. Format: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: August. Contact: Fabrizio Fiumi, Florence International Festival of Independent Cinema, Via Martiri del Popolo 27, 50122 Florence, Italy; tel: (055) 245869/243651.

GHENT INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF FLANDERS, October, Belgium. Now in 16th yr., IFFPA-recognized fest emphasizes importance of music in filmmaking. Official selection consists of competition entitled "The Impact of Music on Film," comprising 12 films com-

peting for 3 awards: best film ($10,000 prize), best original music & best application of music; 8 films out of competition also screened. "Music & Film" section incl. 15 musical films-documentary, musicals & musical features & special events screenings of silent films w/ live musical accompaniment. Other sections are "Country Focus," highlighting various national cinemas; "Film Spectrum," showing selection of int'l films premiering in Belgium (section awards 2 $9000 awards for BRT TV broadcast rights) & section on Belgian cinema. Other sidebars incl. children's films & shorts, symposia & film market. Films must be completed in previous 2 yrs.; entries in competition must be over 50 min. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Aug. 15. Contact: International Film Festival of Flanders-Ghent, Kortrijksesteenweg 1104, 9820 Ghent, Belgium; tel: (91) 218946; fax: (91) 219074; telex: 12750.

HAIFA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, October, Israel. Noncompetitive event held during Jewish holiday Sucoth last yr showed 67 films from 28 countries, most of which had not been bought for commercial distribution in Israel. Fest's policy is to screen important features w/ Hebrew subtitles, screen work w/ directors of new films w/out distribution, hold promotional screenings of films due to be distributed, premiere Israeli films completed in previous yr & schedule day of animated films. Formats: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Aug. 30. Contact: Nissim Dayan, artistic director, Haifa International Film Festival, 142, Hanassi Ave., Haifa, Israel; tel: (04) 386246/384327; telex: 46787 PGING IL.

KARLOVY VARY INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF TOURIST FILMS (TOURFILM), Sept. 27-Oct. 3, Czechoslovakia. Now in 22nd yr., fest incl. competition for 35mm/16mm films & for videos that "contribute to development of inland as well as foreign tourism in spirit of fest motto" (better understanding among nations, for peaceful coexistence). Work must be completed in previous 2 yrs. Awards: Golden Flower (Grand Prix), Silver Flower, Bronze Flower, Spectator's Prize, Czech Peace Council Prize, FIJET (Int'l Federation of Journalists & Writers on Tourism), Vue Touristique Prize, Merkur Publicity/Publishing Corp (direction), Inforfilm Int'l Prize, Montecatini Terme Prize. Entry fee: $75. Docs, animated works under 30 min. accepted. Videos must be PAL standard. Deadline: July 15. Contact: Tourfilm, Sekretariát Merkur, Václavské nám. 28, 11213 Prague 1, Czechoslovakia; telex: 122336.

LA ROCHELLE INTERNATIONAL SAILING FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Oct. 27-Nov. 5, France. Devoted exclusively to films & videos on sailing (modern sailing, int'l races, sailboards, traditional, techniques of sailing, etc.), fest now marking 7th biennial edition. Film cats: offshore (high seas, cruises); waves & wing (sailboards, dinghys, regattas); unusual sails. Video cats: doc; sailing techniques/teaching; fiction. Program also incl. photo & slide exhibitions & selection of publicity films/advertising clips made in 1988/89. Awards: Fest trophy (St. Nicholas Tower) & cash prizes for best film (20,000FF), best video (15,000FF) & best photo (20,000FF). Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Aug. 31. Contact: Michel Massé, chairman, Festival International du Film de Voile de La Rochelle, Port des Minimes, B.P. 145, 17005 La Rochelle, France; tel: (46) 444120/ (46) 451403; fax: (46) 443649; telex: 790 754 CCI LRH.

MANNHEIM INTERNATIONAL FILMWEEK, Oct. 2-7, W. Germany. Now in 38th yr, competitive fest is 1 of oldest in W. Germany & actively seeks artistic discoveries & ind. films: new 1st fiction features, critical docs, short fiction films, experimental & animated works. Awards, decided by int'l jury of 6-9 members: Grand Prix of Mannheim to 1st fiction feature at least 60 min. carries cash award of DM20,000. Other prizes go to film over 45 min. distinguished in its socio-political commitment (DM3000); Josef von Sternberg Prize for most original film (DM 3500); 5 Mannheim Ducats (DM2500 each); Grand Prix for best film for Promotion of Intercultural Dialogue w/ 3 continents (DM10,000). Films must be German premieres unawarded or shown in official sections of other European fests. All participants receive certificate. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Deadline: Aug. 15. Contact: Fee Vaillant, director, Internationale Filmwoche Mannheim, Collini-Center-Galerie, D-6800 Mannheim 1, W. Germany; tel: (0621) 102943; fax: ((0621) 101452; telex: 463423.

MONTREAL INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF NOUVEAU CINEMA, Oct. 19-29, Canada. Independent & artistically innovative films & videos that represent future course of cinema sought for fest, now in 18th edition. Stated objectives: "to discover & distribute experimental, original & innovative works; to be a lively forum & place for discovery, inspiration & reflection & to facilitate professional & artistic exchanges among the different audio-visual specialists attending." Over 80 works from over 20 countries shown last yr. Fest noncompetitive, but $8000 in prizes awarded, incl. $5000 to best feature & $1000 to best short. Best video receives $2000 prize, awarded by separate int'l jury. Entries must be Québec premieres, produced after Jan. 1, 1988. Film/video market runs concurrently. Entry fees: $50 film, $15 video. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, super 8, 3/4". Deadline: Aug. 15. Contact: Claude Chamberlain, dir., Festival International du Nouveau Cinéma et de la Vidéo de Montréal, 3575 Boul. St-Laurent, Bureau 709, Montréal, Québec, Canada H2X 2T7; (514) 843-4725; fax: (514) 843-5681; telex: 5560074 FILMTRANS MTL a/s Filmfest.

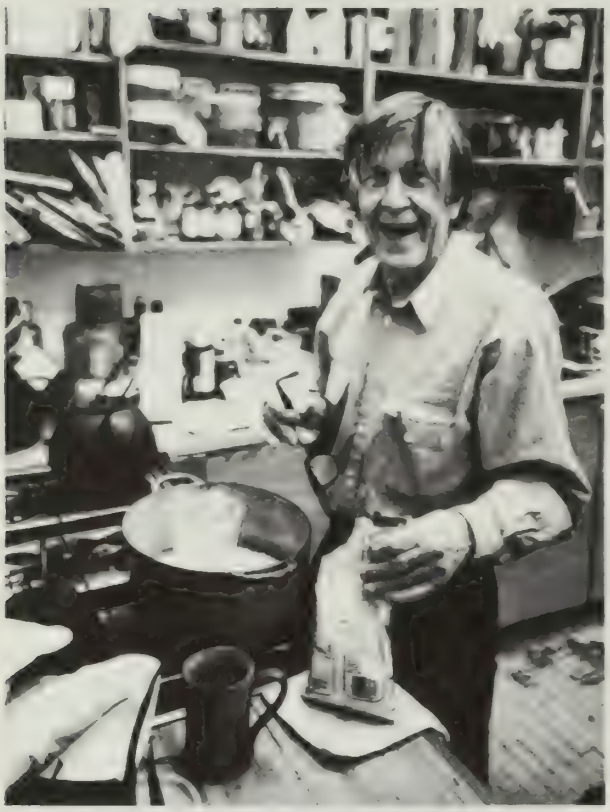
UPPSALA FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 20-29, Sweden. Last yr., selection of over 30 int'l feature films & 130 docs unspooled at fest, which places special emphasis on creative filmmakers & young directors presenting debut films. Fest now in 8th yr. Competition cats: feature, short fiction, animation, doc. Best film in each cat awarded fest statuette Uppsala Filmkaja. Program also incl. Int'l Children's & Young People's Film Festival. Attended by large local audience of over 15,000; 50 journalists covered event & several films received Swedish distribution deals through fest. Deadline: Aug. 18. Contact: Lars Hedenstamm, dir., Uppsala Film Festival, Box 1746, S-751 47 Uppsala, Sweden; tel: (46) 18 162270/103010; telex: 76020 attn: Uppsala Film Festival.

VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Sept. 29-Oct. 15, Canada. 8th annual noncompetitive fest features main sections Cinema of Our Time: Cinema of the Pacific Rim; Best of Britain; Cinema of the Soviet Union; Canadian Images & programs on The Screenwriter's Art & Western Canadian Showcase. Last yr 133 films from 31 countries (32 from US) screened before audiences of about 64,000 & several directors invited to attend w/ films. Entries must not be previously screened commercially or broadcast in British Columbia. Ship preview cassettes prepaid. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2". Deadline: July 31. Contact: Alan Franey, director, Vancouver International Film Festival, Suite 303, 788 Beatty St., Vancouver, BC, Canada V6B 2M1; (604) 685-0260/685-0266; fax: (604) 688-8221; telex: 045-08354 FILMFEST VCR.


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Composer John Cage shares some kitchen tips in Paul Lamarre and Melissa Wolf's *Starving Artists Cookbook Video Series*, an anthology of recipes by 140 artists.

Photo: Paul Lamarre

## Renee Tajima

Two new documentary compilations by videomaker Deanna Kamiel have been released by Intermedia Arts Minnesota. Both tapes explore the short documentary form, in which the maker attempts to move beyond the "talking head" interview and communicate a subject's spirit. The 24-minute tape **Visions of Cinema** looks at the artistic visions behind three of the world's leading film directors, Joseph Mankewicz, Jonathan Demme, and Jean Luc-Godard. In *Visions*, Mankewicz discusses his belief that films should be artistic endeavors geared towards audiences that think critically about the work, rather than mass-produced commodities. Godard critiques the medium in which he works and discusses his use of image and dialogue as a means for allowing viewers to identify their own experiences in his films. In clips from Demme's overlooked movie *Melvin and Howard*, the director demonstrates his penchant for strong characters and plenty of action. Kamiel's 32-minute documentary **Visions of Home** is composed of portraits that explore the importance of place in determining culture, as well as individual and artistic identity. These portraits range from a visit to Mickey's Dining Car, a local eatery of national reputation that has survived urban expansion, to poet-writer Patrica Hampl's travels to Prague, Czechoslavakia, and reflection on her Midwestern background. *Visions of Home* and *Visions of Cinema* were originally created for *Night Times Variety Magazine*, a critically acclaimed public television program. *Visions of Home* and *Visions of Cinema*: Intermedia Arts Minnesota, 425 Ontario St., S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 627-4444.

San Francisco-based filmmaker Trinh T. Minh-Ha opened her third film, **Surname Viet Given Name Nam**, during the New Directors/New Films Series in New York last March. In her new work, Trinh scrutinizes the country of her birth, Vietnam, and focuses on the role of women in the culture. Progressing from reenacted interviews with women who live in Vietnam conducted in English to the words and experiences of immigrant women in the United States related in their native tongue, the film dramatizes the struggle to speak. Printed texts, conflicting voices, folk poetry prescribing correct feminine conduct, and archival footage emphasize the displacements of language, exile, gender, and history. The 108-minute film also played a one-week run at New York's Collective for Living Cinema, following its New Directors/New Films premiere. *Surname Viet Given Name Nam*: Women Make Movies, 225 Lafayette St., Ste. 211, New York, NY 10012; (212) 925-0606.

It is said, "In Nicaragua you're either a son of a poet or a son of a bitch." The literary soul of a nation is presented in **Azul**, a new feature-length film by Roland Legiardi-Laura. Structured in nontraditional documentary style, the film interweaves 24 poems with interviews and debates to create a poetic narrative of the culture and people of Nicaragua. From Doña Chavarria, a peasant woman from the Solentiname Islands, to Chele, a soldier fighting the contras near the Honduran border, and Jose Coronel Urtecho, the 82-year-old poet and grand master of Nicaraguan letters, *Azul* portrays a society in which poetry is integral to everyday life, as well as the broad sweep of history. There are poems of revolution, love poems by young soldiers on patrol, poems about the beauty of the land. Also discussed in the film is the debate over the role of poetry in revolution and the new Nicaraguan society. The 107-minute documentary premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival and Global Village Documentary Festival. *Azul*: Roland Legiardi-Laura, 295 E. 8th St., New York, NY 10009; (212) 529-9327.

Champion skier Diana Golden faces challenges far beyond the mettle of other challengers. She tackles the same mountain slopes, dodging slalom gates at 60 miles per hour and winning races, on one leg. Wendy J. Battles' new documentary, **The Other Olympians**, tells the story of four world-class skiers who refuse to let their disabilities stop them from reaching the top. Among the athletes profiled in the film are Golden, who lost a leg to cancer at the age of 12 and went on to win eight gold medals in international competition; Miguel Perez Tello, who is married to the director's sister, lost both feet in a mountain climbing accident, and is now the only disabled member of the Spanish Cross Country Ski Team; and Bill Henry, one of the few Black competitive skiers in the United States who began skiing after losing the use of his arm in an accident while training for the United States Cycling Team. Battles shot the 28-minute documentary at the World Winter Games for the Disabled in Innsbruck, Austria, during January 1988. Last June the program, which received a grant from Canon USA, was presented on PBS by WHYY/Philadelphia. *The Other Olympians*: North Wind Productions, 236 W. 26th St., Ste. 1005, New York, NY 10001; (212) 242-0587.

Two new works by Jonathan Reiss and Leslie Asako Gladsjo had their Los Angeles premiere at the Nuart Theatre in May. The 40-minute documentary, **The Will to Provoke, An Account of Fantastic Schemes for Initiating Social Improvement**, was produced and directed by Reiss and photographed and edited by Gladsjo. The videotape chronicles the 1988 European performances of the Survival Research Laboratory (SRL) in Amsterdam and Copenhagen. On their first international tour, the world's only machine performance group satirized assorted icons of cultural pride in what is considered two of Europe's more libertarian social democracies. At the same time, the video illustrates the process and ideas that go into making SRL performances. **Pranksi**, directed by Gladsjo, features interviews and performance excerpts with five of the people featured in Re/Search Publications' critically acclaimed book *Pranks*. Highlighted in the video are New York performance artist Karen Finley, SRL founder Mark Pauline discussing billboard im-

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provements, Joe Coleman crashing a party with explosives wired to his chest, Boyd Rice presenting Betty Ford a skinned sheepshead on a silver platter, and Frank Discussion, the intense leader of the seminal punk band Feederz. *The Will to Provoke* and *Pranksi*: Karen Larsen; (415) 957-1205, or Mike Dingle; (415) 552-3565.

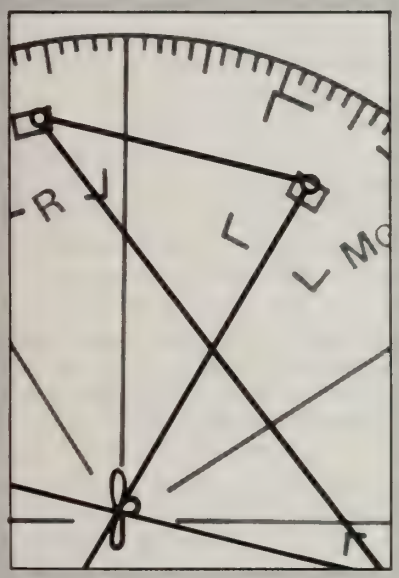
Codirector/producers Paul Lamarre and Melissa Wolf, a.k.a. Paul and Melissa EIDIA, opened their new work, **The Starving Artists' Cookbook Video Series**, at the Anthology Film Archives in New York City last April. The six-part anthology features 140 avant-garde video portraits of artists from around the world as they prepare a variety of "starving artist" recipes. The artists profiled include John Cage making macrobiotic soup while relating his daily routine, William Wegman popping corn using vitamin C tablets, and Louise Bourgeois cutting oxtails with her bandsaw in preparation of an oxtail stew. Shot over a period of two years, each portrait develops into individual autobiographical accounts centered around a culinary performance. The EIDIAs shot 90 hours of tape *cinéma verité* style in the studios and homes of the artists—from New York to London, Amsterdam, Cologne, and Milan. They are also completing a recipe book with original artworks by the artists. *The Starving Artists' Cookbook Video Series*: EIDIA, Box 11, Prince St. Station, New York, NY 10012; (212) 529-0487.



Trinh T. Minh-Ha's latest film, *Surname Viet Given Name Nam*, addresses the role of women within the Vietnamese culture of their homeland and as immigrants in the U.S.

Courtesy Women Make Movies

More video manna is served up by California-based Kate Ecker and Cathleen Schwartz. **Cholesterol Control: An Eater's Guide**, their half-hour, motivational video, provides the basics needed to lower your cholesterol through diet while still eating well. The tape presents the experience of Cathleen and Peter Schwartz and outlines how they achieved a 40 percent reduction in Peter's cholesterol level. According to the program, the key to success was the recognition that they wouldn't be able to sustain the changes if it meant radically altering their lifestyle or observing strict regimes. In addition to cooking and eating tips and techniques, the tape contains a doctor's explanation of what cholesterol is, the associated risk factors, and the basic dietary methods for lowering cholesterol. It also has advice on cleaning out your kitchen and restocking your pantry with the basic foods for low-cholesterol cooking, things to watch out for in the grocery store, how to enjoy restaurants without diverting from your new eating program, and a professional chef's explanation of how to make low-fat, low-cholesterol food taste great. *Cholesterol Control*: Schwartz and Ecker Productions, 6121 Hollis St., Emeryville, CA 94608; (415) 547-2011.

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The Independent's **Classifieds** column includes all listings for "Buy • Rent • Sell," "Freelancers" & "Postproduction" categories. It is restricted to members only. Each entry has a **250 character limit** & costs **$20 per issue.** Ads exceeding this length will be edited. Payment must be made at the time of submission. Anyone wishing to run a classified ad more than once must pay for each insertion & indicate the number of insertions on the submitted copy. Each classified ad must be typed, double-spaced & worded exactly as it should appear.

Deadlines for **Classifieds** will be respected. These are the 8th of each month, **two months** prior to the cover date, e.g., August 8 for the October issue. Make check or money order—no cash, please—payable to FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.

## Buy • Rent • Sell

CRM FILMS: A leading distributor of award-winning educational and business training programs is acquiring completed works. For further information, please call Merrily Weiss at (818) 988-1298.

FOR RENT in your space: Complete Sony 5850, 5800, RM440 3/4" off-line. Anvil cases fold out to form convenient table, cutting space. Reasonable rates. For Sale: 8-plate Steenbeck. 1000' rewind, reinforced handles. VG cond. Must sell. $10,500/b.o. (914) 478-0518.

FOR SALE: Two Arri-mount prime lenses: 25mm Schneider, 75mm Kinoptic. $400 ea. Good condition. Contact Bill (201) 384-8632.

VE 90 EDITING system upgraded to Super90. Incl. editor, TC gen. & readers, fades, interfaces, JVC 5550, JVC 8250, status monitor, Panasonic 19" bdcst monitor w/ cross bars. Perfect. $8500. Microtime TBC 320D frame freeze. Perfect $4500. Roberts Prod. (203) 637-0445.

FOR SALE: Moviola M86 flatbed. Perfect condition. Recently tuned and adjusted by expert Yefin Kiselyuk at cost of $2,000. Willing to sell at $6,000. Also Cine 60 Barney for Arriflex 35. B.O. Roberts Productions (203) 637-0445.

FOR SALE: 3 tube Sony M3 camera, VO 4800 3/4" deck w/ batteries & accessories, fluid head tripod w/ dolly, lights, mikes, cables, connectors, 5" monitor, autopoles w/ seamless. Pkg. or sep. Best offer. (212) 877-5545.

FOR SALE: JVC 210 BUPL camera, 16-1 Fujinon lens, exc. cond.; $4200. Lowel Soft-lite w/ barndoors, like new; $275. Lowel V-lite, Pro-lite location kit; $200. Bogen 3039 tripod w/ head combo, dolly; $400. Video Information Systems (914) 255-7973.

FOR SALE/RENT: JVC CR 4700U, 3/4" portable deck with A.C. adaptor, Porta-Brace c/case & battery; Sony VO2600 3/4" studio deck; O'Connor 50/Lisand camera tripod Nagra 3 w/ microphones. All in great shape! Call Claudio at (212) 664-8009.

SCRIPTS WANTED: Independent New York prod. company seeks feature length screenplays for low budget film(s). All genres welcome; quality most important. Send script or treatment & SASE to: CR Films, Hugues Lavergne, 492 Henry St. # 4H, Brooklyn, NY 11231.

OFFICE FOR RENT: 2 rooms plus reception/secy area, share conference/screening rm, completely furnished, air cond., hi fl, Village/River views, setbacks. $1750/mo incl electric, phone, typewriter, copier. Word processor opt. 1 yr sublet. (212) 206-1213

FOR RENT: Off-line video editing rm fully equipt, 3/4" Sony system w/ sd. mixer, share additional office space & conference/screening rm 24 hr/7 day wk. $1000/wk. Editor avail, fee neg. (212) 206-1213.

## Freelancers

RECORD COMPANY EXPANDING, looking for person w/ special combination of artistic vision, technical expertise & production management skills to direct new video dept. Send resume & demo reel to: Narada Productions, 1845 N. Farwell Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53202 Attn: Anne Bach.

EXPERIENCED ATTORNEY to care for your personal and business related legal matters. General practice includes negotiation and review of contracts, litigation, real estate, negligence and medical malpractice. Free consultation. Peter Foster (212) 254-9368.

NETWORK CREDITED DIRECTOR, videographer w/ Sony broadcast 3/4", 3/4" SP, & Beta pkgs from $300/day. Rental or experienced crews avail. Also complete production services incl. producing, directing & VO casting. Michael, MI-RO Productions, (212) 757-7654.

PROD. CONTACTS: monthly newsletter listing SAG & nonunion films in pre-prod. in US. Lists producers seeking talent & services for upcoming films. $39.95/yr. Sample $5. National Film Sources, 10 E. 39 St., #1017, NYC 10016; (800) 222-3844, credit card orders.

3/4" VIDEO PRODUCTION: 3-tube Sony cameras, tripods, lights, audio, van, experienced cameraman. Very reasonable rates. Smart Video (212) 877-5545.

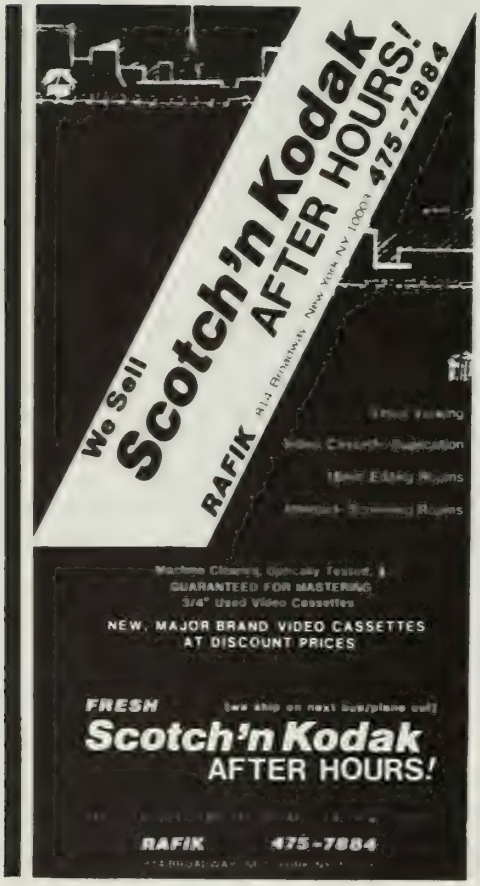
HESSION-ZIEMAN PROD. We make Betacam look like film using Sony BVW507 bdcst high resol. Betacam & Betacam SP w/ complete off-line, on-line postprod. services. Field prod. & rental pkgs to suit your doc, indus., music video or commercial project. (212) 529-1254.

BETACAM SP w/ complete remote package (including Vinten tripod, radio/shot mics, award-winning cameraman, transportation) available for your independent production. Call Hal at (201) 662-7526.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY available for dramatic films, 16 or 35mm productions of any length. Call to see my reel. John (201) 783-7360.

3/4" & BETACAM prod. pkgs avail. Ikegami cameras, Sony decks, full sound & light gear. Best ENG crew in the city. Multi camera shoots. We've done it all, often & w/ the best. RAI (Italy), La Cinque (Paris), WTN (NYC), CBS (NYC). David Wallace (212) 594-7530.

WHATEVER YOU'RE LOOKING FOR, I can find. Call or write for brochure. Design Research, Dept. B, Box 1503, Bangor ME, 04401; (207) 941-0838.



FILM SEARCH: We obtain hard-to-find films (pre-1970) on tape. We are expensive, but good. 5 searches for $5 & SASE. Video Finders, Box 4351-453ind, L.A., CA 90078.

SOUNDMAN: Antonio Arroyo. Nagra, Sennheisers, Micron Radio equipment. Feature & documentary credits. Bilingual & passport. For booking call Amy at CEM crews (212) 620-0084.

3/4" & S-VHS well-maintained equipment with operator. For per diem rates call Kingsley Allison (212) 519-6304.

CAMERAMAN with own equipment available. 16 SR, 35 BL, superspeed lenses, sound equipment, lighting van, passport, certified scuba diver, speak French, a little Spanish. Call (212) 929-7728.

AWARD WINNING VIDEOGRAPHER w/ Sony DXC 3000, 3 chip camera, Sennheiser sound, complete broadcast package. Experienced w/ news gathering, documentaries, dance, industrials & editing. Call John for rates: Ego Video (212) 475-6550.

CINEMATOGRAPHER w/ feature (4), documentary, and commercial credits avail. for film or video projects at any length. Personable, strong visual sense & excellent lighting. Own equipment at a reasonable rate you can afford. Call for demo. Eric (718) 389-7104.

BETACAM PACKAGE—w/ tripod, lights, mics, award-winning cameraman, crew & transportation—available for your project at great rates. Fast and reliable. Broadcast quality. Call Eric (718) 389-7104.

EDITOR/SOUND EDITOR w/ features, doc & industrial exp. avail. for your ind. project. Owns off-line editing system, Steenbeck, digital sound equipment & great sound FX library. Clean, fast & organized. Credits incl. award-winning films. Flexible rates. (718) 389-7104.

3 CHIPS ON THE SHOULDER. Multi-award winning cine/videographer w/ Sony DXC M7, BVW-35 Beta SP, AG 7400 S-VHS, Sachtler, Sennheiser, lowels, station wagon, the works. "A class act" at competitive rates. Supreme Videos. Tony (212) 753-1050.

IKEGAMI HL-95B & Betacam SP field production and rental pkgs for your fashion, music video, corporate and commercial productions. Experienced crew & 24 hr. ENG services available. Reliable and affordable. Media 3 Ltd. (212) 727-7753.

TRANSCRIPT SPECIALIST: Transcripts from audio tapes, speedy turn-around, specializing in documentary. References: Kevin Rafferty (*Atomic Cafe*), Robert Stone (*Radio Bikini*). $2.50/page. Disk copies available. Call for arrangements. (407) 645-2638.

PRO SOUNDMAN/Videotape operator with equipment avail. for film and video shoots. Call for resume and rates: Claudio (212) 664-8009.

NEED ORIGINAL MUSIC for your films? Juilliard Composer and ASCAP winner will enhance your film with creative orchestral or electronic scoring. The music makes all the difference. We are SMPTE/MIDI ready! Call Alexander at (212) 799-8330.

ACTOR FOR V/O AND NARRATION. Off-Broadway veteran, 42 yrs old. Deep voice w/out affectations. Union member, works for scale, no agent involved. Esp. interested in politically progressive projects. Also available for dramatic films. Call Patrick Egan (212) 247-3765.

## Postproduction

BOB BRODSKY & TONI TREADWAY: Super 8 & 8mm film-to-video mastering w/ scene-by-scene color correction to 1", Betacam & 3/4". By appointment only. Call (617) 666-3372.

NEGATIVE MATCHING: 16mm, super 16, 35mm. Credits include Jim Jarmusch, Wim Wenders, Lizzie Borden & Bruce Weber. Reliable results at reasonable rates. One White Glove, Tim Brennan, 321 W. 44th St., #411, New York, NY 10036; (212) 265-0787.

BROADCAST QUALITY EDITING: Edit from Betacam, 3/4" or 3/4" SP. $99/hr including operator, switcher, slo-mo. 50% discount on DVE for AIVF members. Call HDTV Enterprises, Inc., near Lincoln Center (212) 874-4524.

16MM FLATBEDS FOR RENT: 6-plate flatbeds for rent in your workspace or fully equipped downtown editing room w/ 24-hour access. Cheapest rates in NYC for independent filmmakers. Call Philmaster Productions (212) 873-4470.

SUPER 8 24 fps transfers: scene-by-scene color correction w/ CCD telecine, Sony 700 Color Corrector w/ hue, phase, gamma comp, neg-pos reversing, b&w tinting, etc., Tascam & Dolby C. $1-3/min. 1/2", 3/4" & 3/4" SP + stock, $25/min. Gerard Yates (203) 359-8992.

16MM CUTTING ROOMS: 8-plate & 6-plate fully equipped rooms, sound transfer facilities, 24-hr access. Downtown, near all subways and Canal St. Reasonable, negotiable rates. (212) 925-1500.

TOTAL SUPER 8 SOUND FILM SERVICES. All S/8 production, postprod., editing, sync sound, sound mix, multi-track, single & double system sound editing, transfers, stills, etc. Send SASE for rate sheet or call Bill Creston, 727 6th Ave., NY, NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

POST ON THE COAST: Relaxed time-code editing in Maine, hassle free, multi-format (3/4" SP & 1/2", incl. SEG, freezes, Chyron, camera) software based A/B system with edit list generation. Cuts only as low as $20/hr. AIVF discount. Call Expanded Video (207) 773-7005.

3/4" EDITING as low as $375/week in your own home, or $8/hr at our studio. Willing to trade for use of portable 3/4" deck or camera. Sony 2860 with ECS 90 and Sony 5850 with RM440 systems. Gary: (212) 768-1600 day or nite.

CHICAGO FILMMAKERS CO-OP: 16mm production & postproduction equipment for rent at low rates to independents, incl. 8-plate Steenbeck editing suite, CP16 w/ 12-120 Angenieux, Nagra 4.2, etc. 1229 W. Belmont, Chicago, IL 60657; (312) 281-8788.

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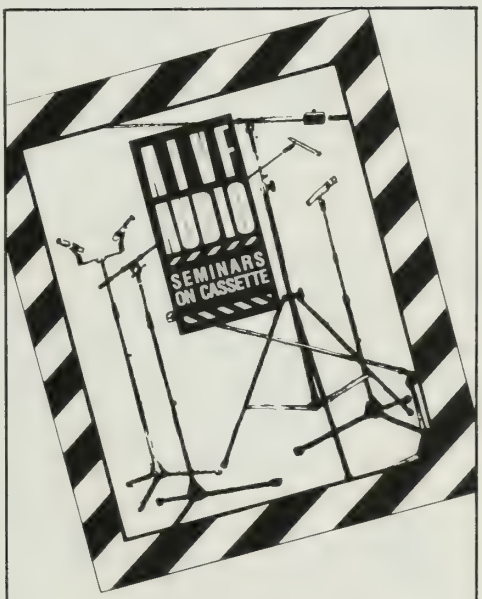
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# NOTICES

**Notices** are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. **The Independent** reserves the right to edit for length.

Deadlines for **Notices** will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date, e.g., August 8 for the October issue. Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

## Conferences • Workshops

3RD WORLD & MINORITY PROGRAMMING CONFERENCE: Sponsored by Rockefeller Foundation, New York State Council on the Arts & Film News Now Foundation, to be held Sept. 1989 in New York City. Contact: Willie Boston, NYSCA, 915 Broadway, New York, NY 10010; (212) 614-3985.

4TH ANNUAL FILM & VIDEO SUMMER INSTITUTE: 1 & 2-week wrkshps & seminars offered in subjects ranging from History of American Film & Film Analysis to Scriptwriting & Video Editing. July 24-Aug. 11. Contact: Susan Horowitz, FAVSI, Univ. of Hawaii Summer Session, 101 Krauss Hall, 2500 Dole St., Honolulu, HI 96822; (808) 948-7221.

FREE SEMINAR: On-Line Editing with the Standby Program is intro to Standby's access program, which provides video services to artists & independent producers. Seminar will detail producer's role in using computerized video studio & help prepare edit. Topics incl. available formats, timecode, off-line edit prep & capabilities of digital video effects devices. Mon., July 10, 6-10 pm. Call in advance to reserve space. Also seminar on Producing an Ultra-Low Budget Feature offered by Dov S-S Simens. July 8 & 9. Contact Film/Video Arts, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003.

INT'L FILM & TV WORKSHOPS: Master Program in Dramatic Film offered in fall '89 for up-and-coming filmmakers to participate in entire process of making dramatic film, from script development to shooting, editing, presentation & sale. Only 35 participants accepted. Contact: Film Workshops, 2 Central St., Rockport, ME 04856; (207) 236-8581, fax (207) 236-2558.

SAN FRANCISCO ART INSTITUTE: Summer programs incl. Session II, Film, Performance/Video & Contemporary Criticism, July 5-Aug. 11. Contact SFAI Summer, 800 Chestnut St., San Francisco, CA 94133; (415) 771-0600.

SIGGRAPH: 16th annual conference on computer graphics & interactive techniques. Hynes Convention Center, Boston, MA. 16 panels & special sessions on history of computer graphics. July 31-Aug. 4. For more info, contact: SIGGRAPH '89, Conference Management, 111 E. Wacker Dr., Ste. 600, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 644-6610.

SOUTHEASTERN MEDIA INSTITUTE: Intensive week-long, professional media prod. workshops in 3/4" video, 16mm film, computer graphics, electronic music, interactive video, photography, film criticism, scriptwriting, animation & others. July 10-23. Contact: Southeastern Media Institute, SC Arts Commission Media Arts Center, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201; (803) 734-8696.

THE VIDEO FRONTIER: National Federation of Local Cable Programmers annual conference. July 12-16; Dallas, TX. Incl. educational sessions, Hometown Video Awards, regional wrkshps, int'l committee meeting. Registration fees: from $140-275, members; $165-300, nonmembers after June 1. For more info, contact: NFLCP Annual Conference, Quinta Martin Consulting Services, 40 Lake Edge Dr., Euclid, OH 44123; (216) 261-2836.

VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP: Summer courses on Electronic Imaging & Sound: Amiga Computer Sound, July 3-7; Macintosh Computer, July 10-14; Digital/Video Electro Terrain: The Moving Image, July 10-14; Synthesizer & MIDI for the Audio Artist, July 24-29. Contact: Visual Studies Workshop, 31 Prince St., Rochester, NY 14607; (716) 442-8676.

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS: Seminar: "Work for Hire," Sept. 28, 7 pm, Pfizer Auditorium, 235 E. 42nd St., New York, NY. Contact: VLA, 1285 Ave. of the Americas, 3rd fl., New York, NY 10019; (212) 977-9270.

## Films • Tapes Wanted

ART COM: seeks artists working in electronic media for inclusion in forthcoming *Electronic Media Distribution Catalog*, featuring broadcast TV programs, video art on videotape & videodisc, interactive video & computer software by artists. Also encourages artists to send sample works for touring exhibition of interactive video organized by Carl Loeffler. Women artists encouraged to send sample works for incl. in touring exhibition of video art investigating recent expressions of identity, sexuality & social critique organized by Anna Couey. Send samples of video works along w/ support material & return postage to: Art Com, Box 3123 Rincon, San Francisco, CA 94119-3123; (415) 431-7524.

CHANNEL L WORKING GROUP invites video artists to submit 3/4" or 1/2" tapes for award-winning, 10-week cable series *Video Spectrum*. Series shown throughout Manhattan. All works must be shot in video, max. length 28 mins. All genres accepted but must deal w/ social or political issues. People of color strongly urged to apply. $16-20/min. paid for selected works. Deadline: Aug. 31. Send tapes plus SASE & phone number to *Video Spectrum*, Channel L Working Group, 51 Chambers St., Rm. 532, New York, NY 10007; (212) 964-2960.

EXTRAORDINARY WORKS wanted in all areas: doc, narrative, children's, performance, music, etc., for direct mail distribution. Send VHS submissions to Michael Davis, Reel Video, Rt. 1, Box 72A, Linn, WV 26384; (304) 269-3029. Please incl. $2 for return postage w/ each tape.

THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE: Public TV series devoted to Amer. history seeks hour-long doc films—in development, near completion, or completed—for 1989 & future seasons. Submit cassettes, when available, along w/ proposals outlining story, major historical themes, techniques of filming & available archival sources. Incl. funding history of project, resumes of key personnel, awards & press clippings if applicable. Tapes will be returned. Contact: Llew Smith, series editor, *The American Experience*, WGBH, 125 Western Ave., Boston, MA 02134; (617) 492-2777, x 4235.

## Opportunities • Gigs

POSITION AVAILABLE: Asst. Prof. of media arts, tenure-track, beg. Sept. 1989 at Univ. of Texas, Arlington. Responsible for teaching 3 courses per semester & independent study projects. Primarily supervise video prod. for broadcast; also help further develop contemporary media arts program at major urban university located in Dallas/Ft. Worth area. Salary competitive. Appl. date open; search will continue until position is filled. Send CV, tapes and/or films, reviews & articles, catalogues, separate statements regarding your work & educ. philosophy, names/telephone no. of 3 references & SASE. Apply to: Larry Travis, Acting Chair, Dept. of Art, Univ. of Texas at Arlington, Box 19089, Arlington, TX 76019.

## Publications

JOURNAL OF ARTS MANAGEMENT 1989 special summer issue entitled "Social Responsibility & the Arts" now available. Guest edited by Ellsworth H. Brown, pres. of Chicago Historical Society. Price: $15.25. Contact: Cheryl Carnahan, Heldref Publications., 4000 Albemarle St., NW, Washington, DC 20016.

VIDEO DATA BANK: Video Against AIDS catalog now available. 3-tape, 6-hr. VHS compilation curated by John Geyson & Bill Horrigan sells for $300 to institutions & $150 to individuals. Also avail.: 1989 New Listings Supplement & What Does She Want? video series catalog. Contact: Video Data Bank, 280 S. Columbus, Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 443-3793.

## Resources • Funds

1989-90 FULBRIGHT GRANT w/ the UK: Special fellowship in film & TV designed for emerging & mid-career professionals, geared toward practitioner rather than academic. Deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: Steven Blodgett/Michael Doyle, Council for Int'l Exchange of Scholars, 3400 International Drive, NW, Ste. M-500, Washington, DC 20008-3097; tel. (202) 686-6239; fax (202) 362-3442; telex 23-7401891-CIES UC.

ALASKA STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS Project Grant deadline: Nov. 1. Contact: ASCA, 619 Warehouse Ave., Ste. 220, Anchorage, AK 99501-1682; (907) 279-1558.

EXPERIMENTAL TV CENTER: Residency Program offers artists opportunity to study techniques of image processing during 5-day, intensive residency. Artists must have prior experience in video prod. Appls must incl. resumé & project description indicating how image-processing is integrated into work. 1st time applicants asked to send recently completed work on 3/4" or VHS format along with SASE. Deadline: July 15. Contact: ETC, 180 Front St., Owego, NY 13827; (607) 687-1423.

FIVF Donor-Advised Film & Video Fund: Grants available in following categories: Marjorie Benton Peace Film Award of $5,000 for completed film or video that best promotes public understanding of int'l peace & $10,000 postprod. grant for work-in-progress; Benton Foundation $10,000 postprod. grant for work-in-progress that explores role of communications & info in society; Beldon Fund $20,000 for prod., editing, completion, or distribution of works dealing w/ environmental issues; $12,000 Edelman Family grants for projects that explore or document social change. Preference to development funds for projects addressing contemporary issues. Deadline: July 3. Contact: FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012.

Independent Production Fund: Grants upwards of $5000 to film- & videomakers from TX, AK, OK, MS, KS, NB, PR & U.S.V.I. Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact IPF89, Southwest Alternate Media Project, 1519 W. Main, Houston, TX 77006.

Intermedia Arts Media Arts Production Awards of equipment & facilities use & support to artists working in video, electronic music, computer graphics, animation & performance. Awards based on submitted proposals for creation or production of whole or partial projects. 6-10 awards given annually. Appl. deadlines: Aug. 1 & Nov. 1. Indiv. emerging or prof. artists or groups of collaborating artists eligible, w/ no residential requirements. Contact: Intermedia Arts, 425 Ontario St., SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 627-4444.

Midatlantic Arts Foundation Visual Arts Residency grants avail. for 1990/91 projects. Supports residencies by indiv. artists & prof. art critics. Deadline: July 14. Contact: MidAtlantic Arts Foundation, 11 E. Chase St., Ste. 2A, Baltimore, MD 21202; (301) 539-6656.

National Endowment for the Arts: Deadlines: Narrative Film Development, Sept. 15; Radio Projects, Oct. 10; Film/Video Production, Nov. 13. Contact: Media Arts Program, NEA, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20506; (202) 786-0278.

National Endowment for the Humanities: Humanities Projects in Media deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: James Dougherty, NEH, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20506; (202) 786-0278.

Rhode Island State Council on the Arts: Artist Development Grant deadline: Aug. 1 & Dec. 1; Artist Projects, Dec. 1. Contact: RISCA, 95 Cedar St., Ste. 103, Providence, RI 02903.

South Carolina Arts Commission: Appl. deadlines: Artists Fellowships, Sept. 15; Artists Projects, Jan. 15. Contact SCAC, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201.

United States Institute of Peace: Grants Program for scholarship, educ., training & public information in int'l peace & conflict mgmt. Appl. deadlines: Oct. 1, Feb. 1. Contact: US Institute of Peace, Grants Program, 1550 M St., NW, Ste 700, Washington, DC 20005-1708; tel. (202) 457-1700; fax (202) 429-6063.

## Trims & Glitches

AIVF Members who won 1989 New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowships are, in film, Ralph Arlyck, Mark Daniels, Karen Lynn Goodman, Mary Halawani, Franco Marinai, Zydnia Nazario, Susan Robeson & Victoria Vega Schultz. Video fellows are Joan Braderman, Sachiko Hamada & Scott Sinkler, Kathryn High, Henry Coshey Linhart, David Meieran, Geoffrey O'Connor, Mary M. Patierno, Demetria Royals & Sarah Tuft. Congratulations!

1989 Guggenheim Fellows in film & video include AIVF members Su Friedrich, Peter Barrington Hutton, Shalom Gorewitz, DeeDee Halleck & Joan Logue. Kudos!

AIVF Members Julie Dash & J. Bernard Nicolas & Loni Ding have been awarded production funds from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Congratulations!

Annie Goldson has earned a Checkerboard Foundation video grant for her tape *Counterterror—Northern Irish Segment*. Congrats!

Congrats to Gary Krane, whose *Losing Control* earned 1st Place in 2 categories at the National Educational Film & Video Festival.

Mark Gasper's *An Empty Bed* has won honorable mention in the Best Drama category at the Atlanta Film & Video Festival. Congratulations!


**Help Yourself. Join AIVF today!**

Membership in AIVF provides you with:

- **THE INDEPENDENT** Film and Video Monthly
- **Insurance**
- **Festival Bureau**
- **Advocacy**
- **Seminars**
- **Discounts**
- **Free MPE Directory**

- **THE INDEPENDENT** the only national magazine devoted exclusively to independent film and video production
- **Insurance**: Group life, medical, disability and equipment insurance at affordable rates, plus dental insurance for New York and New Jersey residents
- **Festival Bureau**, with current information on over 400 international and domestic film and video festivals, and screenings of your work for visiting festival directors
- **Advocacy** in government, industry, and public forums to increase support for independent production
- **Seminars** on business, technical, and aesthetic issues (audio recordings available)
- **Discounts** on professional services, including car rental, film labs, post-production facilities, and equipment rental
- **Free** semi-annual copies of Motion Picture TV & Theatre Directory ($6.95 value)

Join **AIVF** today and get a one-year subscription to **THE INDEPENDENT**. Yearly membership rates are $45 individual (add $12 for first class mailing of **THE INDEPENDENT**); $25 student (enclose proof of student ID); $60 library (subscription only); $85 organization; $60 foreign (outside the US, Canada & Mexico). To charge (Mastercard and Visa), call (212) 473-3400. Or send check or money order to: AIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012

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# MEMORANDA

## CORRECTIONS

"School Days: The National Alliance of Media Arts Centers Conferrence" in the May issue incorrectly identified Margaret Cooper as a member of the New Day distribution collective. She is a programming and distribution consultant who works with a number of U.S. and Canadian media organizations, including New Day.

## FIVF THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the foundation affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent producer community, including publication of *The Independent*, maintenance of the Festival Bureau, seminars and workshops, an information clearinghouse, and a grant making program. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the following agencies, foundations and organizations: The New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fund, the Beldon Fund, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Consolidated Edison Company of New York, the Benton Foundation, and the Funding Exchange.

## MEMORIAL FUND FOR VIDEO ART

Donations are sought for the Barbara Aronofsky Latham Memorial Fund, a private fund established for grants to video artists and video art criticism. Named in honor of this pioneer in video who died in 1984, the fund awards grants approximately every two years, when interest on the account reaches a sufficient amount. Even small donations will help extend the work accomplished by this fund. Contributions should be sent to: Jana Wright, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 37 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60603.

## AIVF/FIVF BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

Robert Aaronson, Adrianne Benton, Skip Blumberg (treasurer), Christine Choy, Loni Ding (vice-president), Lisa Frigand,* Dai Sil Kim-Gibson, Wendy Lidell (secretary), Regge Life (chair), Tom Luddy,* Lourdes Portillo, Robert Richter (president), Lawrence Sapadin (ex officio), Steve Savage,* Deborah Shaffer, John Taylor Williams.*

* FIVF Board of Directors only

## AIVF REGIONAL CORRESPONDENTS

AIVF has recently instituted a network of regional correspondents, who will provide membership information, hold meetings, and aid recruitment in areas of the country outside New York City. AIVF members are urged to contact them about AIVF-related needs and problems, about your activities, and other relevant information and news:

**Joyce Bolinger**, executive director
Center for New Television
912 S. Wabash
Chicago, IL 60605
(312) 427-5446

**Cheryl Chisolm**
2844 Engle Road, NW
Atlanta, GA 30318
(404) 792-2167

**Deanna Morse**
3370 Byron Center, SW, #302
Wyoming, MI 49509
(615) 534-7605

**Barton Weiss**
1611 Rio Vista Drive
Dallas, TX 75208
(214) 948-7300

# PROGRAM NOTES

## Morton Marks

***Business Manager/Audio Director***

The number of bookstores succumbing to the rising costs of doing business and the wave of large, established publishing houses being swallowed by larger conglomerates is alarming. Where does it all end? Since November 1988 the list of books and audiotapes available through AIVF has expanded even further, in our efforts to give independent producers better access to the kind of information that has become increasingly hard to find elsewhere. Since the stepped-up marketing of our book/tape list over two years ago, growth in sales as well as the number of items on our list has proceeded apace. We saw an 80 percent growth in sales during the past year, compared to the previous year. As of May 1989, sales were up 90 percent. We now carry over 160 titles—the largest list of books and tapes on media production available by mail in the U.S. (These publications are also available at AIVF's office in Manhattan.)

The expanded AIVF Publications list includes resource directories on the West Coast, documentary studies, screenwriting, technical issues, and distribution. Reference books on production from California that we now carry are *LA 411*, *The Hollywood Blu-Book Directory*, *The Hollywood Creative Directory*, *The Reel Directory*, *The San Jose Film and Video Guide*, and *The Oregon Film and Video Directory*. In addition to selling books on various aspects of independent media production, we also distribute catalogues from other media centers/distributors. Catalogues that will be included on the updated list, scheduled for release this fall, are from Asian CineVision, Electronic Arts Intermix, Facets Multimedia, Intermedia Arts, the Kitchen, Third World Newsreel, Video Data Bank, Women Make Movies, California Newsreel, Filmmaker's Coooperative, Canyon Cinema, Cinema Guild, and Black Filmmaker Foundation.

At the same time, the audiotapes of FIVF seminars have now reached media centers' libraries and professionals in the field in over 29 states. The newest addition to our list—the tape of the Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Festival seminar, "Does Radical Content Require Radical Form?"—is now available. This is the first recording of an event sponsored by another organization distributed by AIVF.

Future development and marketing plans also concern the distribution of *The AIVF Guide to International Film and Video Festivals*. UMI Research Press, an educational publisher, has recently included the *Guide* in their summer 1989 catalogue and they will mail promotional materials on the book to their international list of 78,000 college and university librarians, deans, undergraduate and graduate faculty, and members of specialized societies such as the Society for Cinema Studies. UMI will also mail a press release describing the *Guide* to selected journals and mailing lists, and they will display the book at the American Booksellers Association annual conference.

New books, catalogues, pamphlets, and audiotapes will continue to be added to AIVF Publications' offerings. Marketing efforts also will likewise be continually intensified to reach more independent film/videomakers.

# BLUE • COYOTE • FILM • FESTIVAL

The Blue Coyote is seeking short films for participation in the upcoming Blue Coyote Film Festival to be held in New York City during the week of December 3, 1989. Blue Coyote is accepting films in six categories: Narrative, Animated (including Picsolated, and Computer generated), Documentary and Experimental, Music Video and Student Work. In order to maintain the fairest judging standard the festival has subdivided each category into particular time groups.

***Maximum time on any film is 30 minutes**



***NARRATIVE: (5 minutes or under), (5-30 minutes)***
***ANIMATED: (5 minutes or under)***
***DOCUMENTARY: (5 minutes or under), (5-30 minutes)***
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***MUSIC VIDEO: (Time is only determined by song length)***
***STUDENT WORK: (5 minutes or under), (5-30 minutes)***



***Deadline for submission to the festival is September 15, 1989**

The Blue Coyote was created to allow gifted young filmmakers the opportunity to have their work seen and appreciated not only for the time of the festival, but also the chance to have his/her work placed on a winners' compilation video to be distributed nationally under the auspices of the festival. Blue Coyote is also working in conjunction with several large cable networks to enable festival participants the further chance of having their work viewed on television.

Through our sponsorship Blue Coyote is also offering a cash and/or service and/or equipment prizes to the winners, as well as a production grant.

Completed work **must be submitted for viewing on 1/2" or 3/4" video tape.** Rough cuts will be accepted if the work in progress can be assured of completion by October 15, 1989. (Works in progress may still be shown at the festival if the judges feel that it is appropriate, but will not be eligible for awards) — All films entered must be accompanied by a brief synopsis as to content and context (Judges will make final decision as to category placement). Please provide personal contacting information on the same sheet.

Final judging will begin after the September 15 deadline, but films will be viewed as they are received -- so early submissions are greatly appreciated.

**Entry fees for work submitted are $35.00 for all work (in any category), and $30.00 for any student film submitted.**

Please make check or money orders payable to **Blue Coyote Inc.** Entries and payment to be sent to **217 East 85th Street, Suite 340, New York, NY 10028. Telephone (212) 439-1158.**


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A PUBLICATION OF THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT VIDEO AND FILMMAKERS

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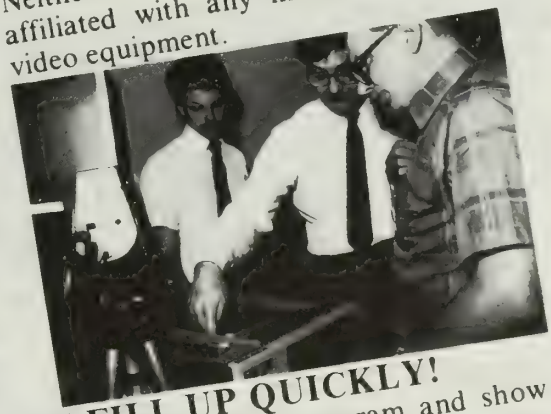
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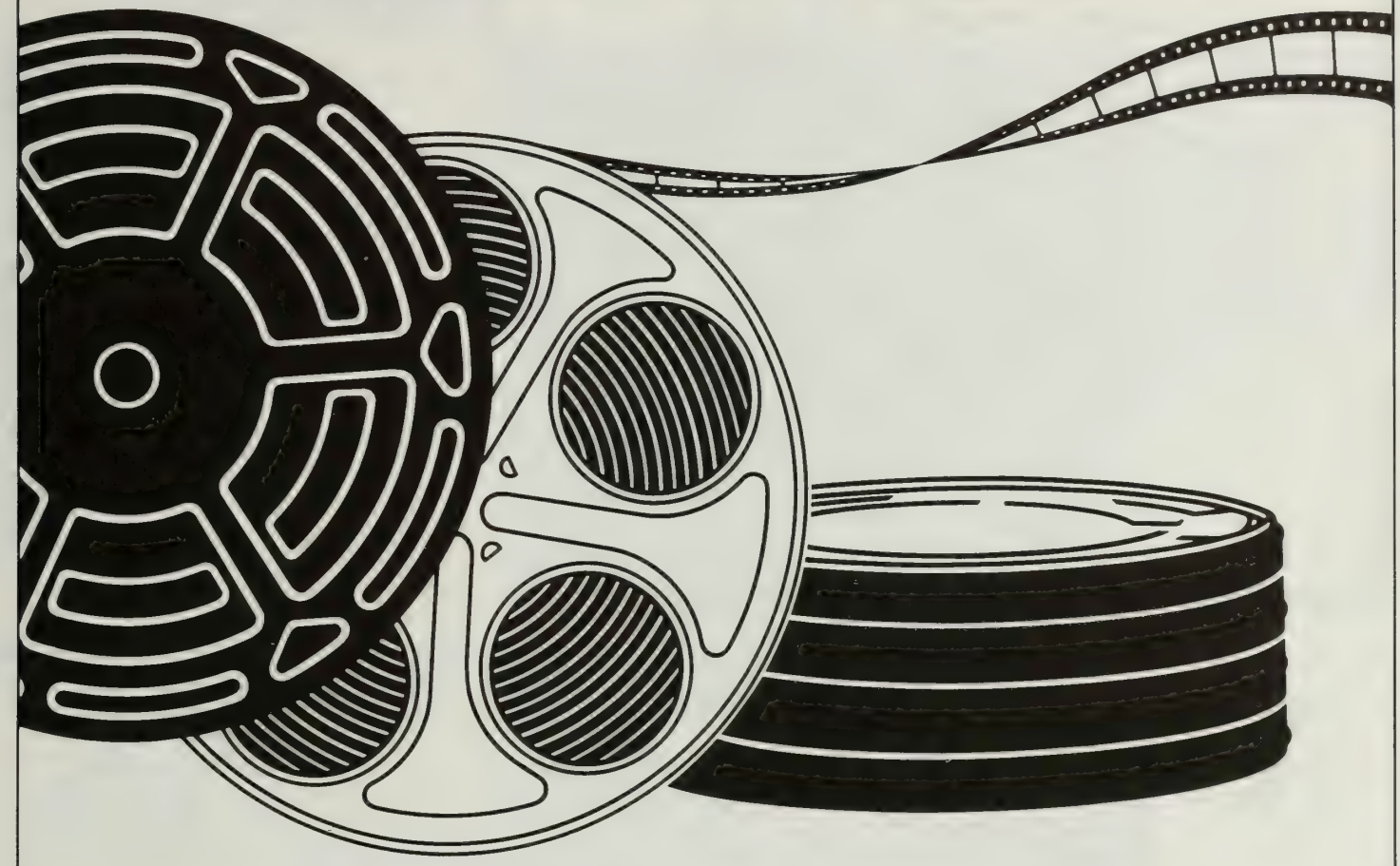
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COVER: This month's issue features a special section on media education, covering a variety of innovative learning programs and proposals. Topics range from actual projects like the Poetry Video Learning Project, where high school students learn about visual metaphor and mood when creating video images to accompany their poems about hands (pictured), to broader issues in media education today. The special section includes articles on the gap between theory and production reproduced by institutions of higher education, the representation of women in college textbooks on production, the progress of the new international film and television school in Cuba, and how media literacy might be incorporated into education programs—from elementary school on up. Photo: Cyrille Phipps, courtesy Rise and Shine Productions.

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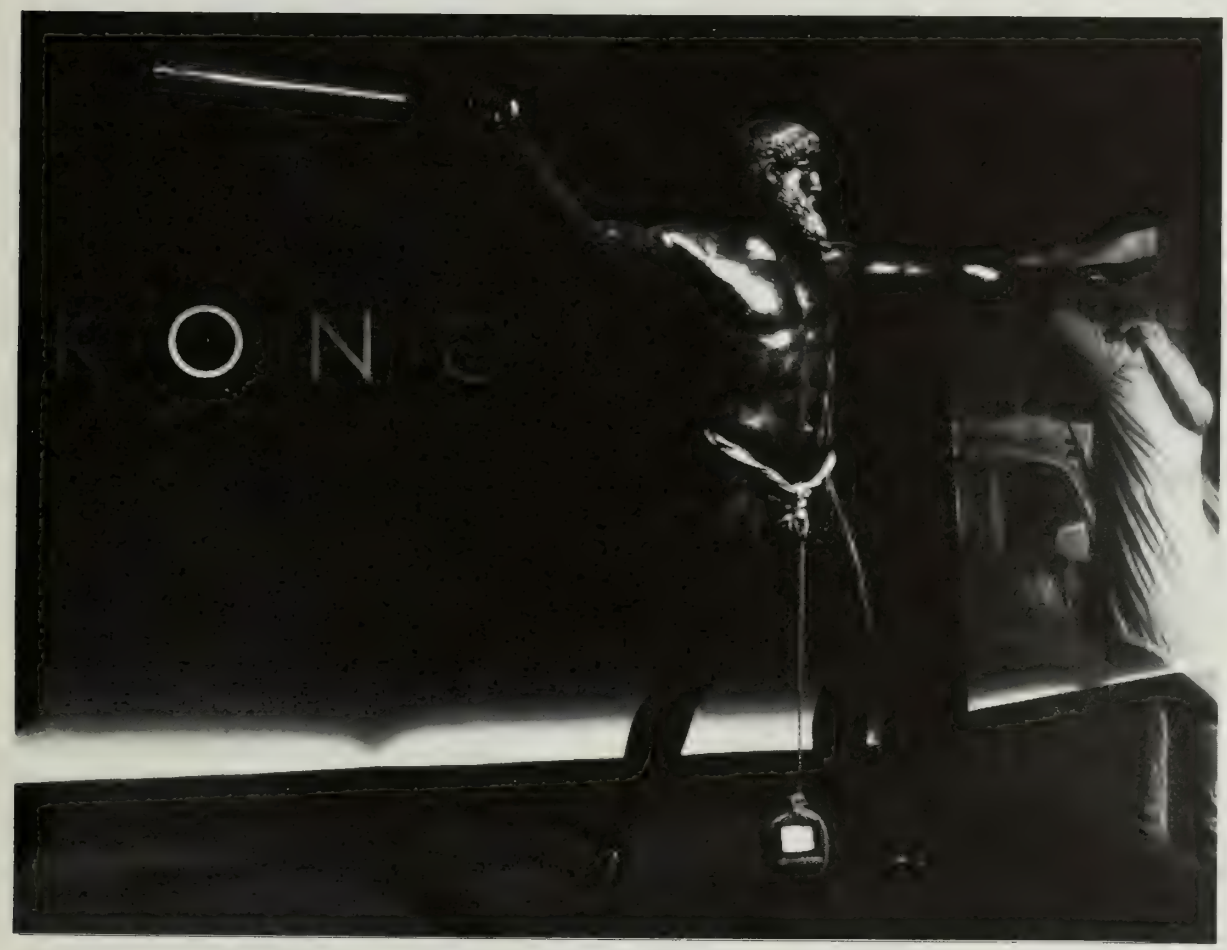
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Books and Tapes

# CLASH OF THE TITANS: THE MET PROTESTS VIDEO INSTALLATION AT THE WHITNEY



**Francesc Torres' video installation in the Whitney Biennial exhibition was clouded by controversy when the Metropolitan Museum, owner of the statue of Zeus that Torres borrowed for his work, didn't like their god's new accoutrements.**

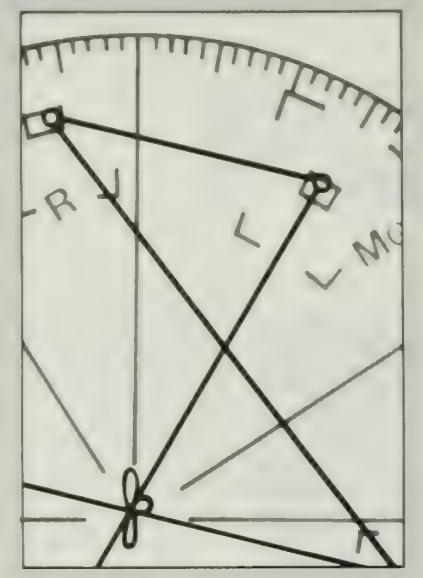
Photo: Bill Jacobson Studio, courtesy Whitney Museum of American Art

Seldom does independent film or video attract the attention of mainstream art establishments, but it does when the art work in question provokes controversy. And controversy visited a multimedia installation by Francesc Torres entitled *Oikonomos*, which was featured in this year's Whitney Museum of American Art's Biennial exhibition. Shortly after the show opened in May, the installation was the target of harsh criticism from the Metropolitan Museum of Art and became embroiled in an unusual tug of war involving the Met, the Whitney, and Torres.

Torres' *Oikonomos* (meaning economics in Greek) installation centers on an nearly seven-foot-tall statue of Zeus, poised with baseball bat in hand, appearing to aim his weapon at a screen projecting video images of homeless men washing car windows. A video monitor is suspended from the statue's penis and plays scenes of Wall Street and car races. The gallery where *Oikonomos* was on display was temporarily closed to the public when the statue's owner, the Metropolitan Museum, threatened to repossess it. Claiming that Torres' use of its statue was irrelevant to the original work, Dietrich von Bothmer, the head of the Greek and Roman art department at the Met, demanded that the bat and monitor be removed immediately from the statue. He publicly denounced the Whitney and Torres for presuming to defile a borrowed piece of art without notifying the Met. Had he known about its use, von Bothmer told the *New York Times*, he would never have lent the Zeus figure. Von Bothmer's protests then prompted Whitney Museum director Tom Armstrong to appeal to the Met's director, Philippe de Montebello, but to no avail. According to John Hanhardt, head of the Whitney's film and video program, "[Von Bothmer and the Met] were upset that elements had been added to what they considered an important work of art. There was no room for discussion."

Arguments over Torres' use of the statue stem from opposing views about how one work of art can be incorporated into another. For both the Whitney and the artist, the additions do not constitute an alteration of the original work. Furthermore, Torres and Hanhardt point out that the Met's statue is a bronze replica; the original stands in the National Museum in Athens, Greece. The Met's piece, says Hanhardt, is a good copy, but one of several made in the 1930s that adorn the lobbies of such major public institutions as the United Nations. Moreover, he and Torres question the significant value that von Bothmer assigned the statue, especially when it has been on loan to the Queens Museum—which in turn lent it to Torres—since the early seventies.

The vehemence of the Met's reaction took both Hanhardt and Torres by surprise. By Torres' account, when he initially borrowed the statue from the Queens Museum, he informed Queens Museum officials of his purpose, assuming that they would pass this information on to Met offi-

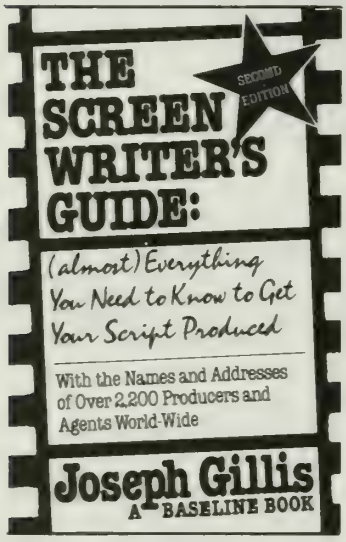


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cials. In an interview with *The Independent*, however, Eileen Sheppard, director of exhibitions at the Queens Museum, maintains that she simply asked the Met and received permission to loan the statue to Torres without ever being informed about Torres' plans.

Hanhardt believes that von Bothmer's reaction was idiosyncratic and says that several classicists he spoke to about the dispute agree. Torres, on the other hand, thinks that von Bothmer actually responded to the political content of his work. "[Von Bothmer] was offended more by the content of my work than the use of the statue. A piece dealing with power generated a power reaction," he observes. "It's not just a coincidence that the Met, a powerful art establishment, did this. The art world reflects the wider, market-oriented, conservative, socio-political atmosphere." For Torres, the statue symbolizes absolute power in patriarchal Western society.

Despite taking issue with the Met's position, Torres removed the various props he had affixed to the statue. After all, he says, "It is important that this event be known but not blown out of proportion so that it becomes a bigger issue than it really is." He then placed the monitor and bat on the floor next to Zeus and displayed a photograph of the original installation in the gallery. Subsequently, publicity about the incident prompted a private owner of another replica of the Zeus figure to lend his statue to the Whitney. The Met's statue was returned and the installation's original arrangement restored. The new statue, says Torres, is even a closer replica of the original because it doesn't have eyes, whereas the Met's does. Torres' installation remained on view until the Biennial closed in mid-July.

QUYNH THAI

## BOOK ON UNESCO THREATENED WITH LAWSUIT

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) tried unsuccessfully this spring to suppress a book it commissioned about itself. The censorship attempt is an indication of UNESCO's recent courtship of the United States, which resigned its membership in 1984. The book at issue, *Hope and Folly: The United States and UNESCO, 1945-1985*, by William Preston Jr., Edward S. Herman, and Herbert I. Schiller, is the first English language book to analyze what lay behind the resignation of the U.S. from UNESCO. Due for fall publication by the University of Minnesota Press, *Hope and Folly* surveys the shifting relationship between the two powers—from UNESCO's post-war origins, through the independence movement among Third World colonies in the 1960s, to the U.S.' growing antagonism during the Reagan years. At the root of this disenchantment was UNESCO's advocacy of a New International Information Order, an initiative intended to expand the range of Third World voices and perspectives in world media, curtail the one-way flow of Western information and advertising, and assert national sovereignty in communications matters. Prior to its withdrawal, the U.S. prepped national opinion by launching an extensive media attack against UNESCO and its then director-general Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow of Senegal, a vocal critic of insensitivity to the Third World in the West. "The purpose of this book," write Ellen Ray and William Schaap in the book's introduction, "is to put the anti-UNESCO campaign in historical perspective, to elaborate the *entire* history of U.S.-UNESCO relations, without which it is impossible to understand fully the events of the last few, stormy years of what was once a staunch alliance."

UNESCO commissioned the book, approved the manuscript, and paid for *Hope and Folly* when M'Bow was still in office. After he was replaced in 1987 by Federico Mayor Zaragoza of Spain, UNESCO notified *Hope and Folly*'s joint copyright holder, the New York-based Institute of Media Studies (IMS), which is headed by Ray and Schaap, that it did not want to proceed with publication, fearing the book would "open up old wounds" and antagonize U.S. conservatives at a time when UNESCO was actively seeking the U.S.' return—along with the superpower's sizable membership dues.

As a joint copyright holder, IMS decided to proceed with publication, offering to print a disclaimer indicating that it was not an official UNESCO publication. UNESCO nevertheless threatened IMS and the University of Minnesota Press with a lawsuit to stop publication. At this point, IMS went public. The AP, UPI, Reuters, and Interpress wire services carried the story, which was subsequently picked up by the Voice of America and landed on the front pages of numerous Third World newspapers. In addition, the international writers' organization Pen quickly responded with a letter of protest. Major U.S. papers, however, were silent on the controversy. But within a week of the media coverage and public outcry, UNESCO quietly dropped its suit. "This just shows what some press attention can do," says Ray. A triumphant IMS is now exploring the possibility of a French edition.

PATRICIA THOMSON

## SEQUELS

**Film Forum**, the nonprofit showcase of independent and foreign films in downtown Manhattan, whose building has been slated for demolition, has secured a new space ["Film Forum's Demolition Deadline," May 1989]. In early 1990 it will reopen as a three-screen theater on West Houston Street, seven blocks from its current location, if it can raise the $1.7-million needed for construction. Film Forum will be looking to fed-

eral, state, and city arts funding agencies for financial assistance, but even at maximum levels these agencies can provide only five percent of the total amount. The rest must come from individual donations. A major building campaign for Film Forum has recentlybeen announced.

□ □ □

A new location has also been found by **Standby**, the on-line artists' video access program in New York City which was without a home after Megamedia closed in March ["Standby on Standby," May 1989]. Standby now has its offices in CinéVid-TVC, where most of its postproduction services are performed. The nonprofit program also has arrangements with TVC, Editel, and C&C Visuals, and is currently negotiating with several other facilities for off-hours use of equipment. For further information, contact: Standby, 25 W. 45th St., New York, NY 10036; (212) 757-1812.

□ □ □

Purdue University's Public Affairs Video Archives, which contains off-air recordings of both channels of **C-SPAN** (Cable Satellite Public Affairs Network), is now open to the public for research and review ["C-SPAN Footage Archived," November 1988]. Further information is available from Robert X. Browning, director, Public Affairs Video Archives, Stewart Center G-39, West Lafayette, IN 47907; (317) 494-9630.

□ □ □

The budget cuts that the **New York State Council on the Arts** suffered in fiscal year 1988/89 because of a $1.9-billion shortfall in the New York State budget will be restored next year ["NYSCA Creates Controversy Over Media Program," December 1988 and "Sequels," January/February 1989]. The recently announced funding levels for NYSCA in 1989/90 are up $8.3-million, for a total of $54.8-million.

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At the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, **Jennifer Lawson** has been promoted to the position of director of the Program Fund, a post vacated by Ron Hull in 1988. Lawson, who has acted as associate director since 1983, will now manage the $42.7-million fund, which administers the Open Solicitations category and funds major series produced by consortia of public television stations, like *American Playhouse* and *Frontline*. The State University of New York at Buffalo recently announced a new head for its Department of Media Study. **Brian Henderson**, a scholar of avant-garde film theory and SUNY/Buffalo faculty member since 1974, will chair the department. He replaces Gerald O'Grady, who founded the seminal, now-defunct media arts center Media Study/Buffalo and remains on the faculty of SUNY/Buffalo.


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# FREEDOM'S JUST ANOTHER WORD... AT THE 1989 NAB CONVENTION




**Three broadcasters sample transmissible HDTV at the NAB convention.**

Photos. Bill Stamets

Bill Stamets

*Defocus data? Chroma crawl?*

*Can High Definition Television's capacity for four- or five-fold increase in signal information actually "contribute to a better understanding of world cultures...and a true understanding between nations?" The HDTV 1125/60 Group says so.*

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—company public relations brochures distributed at the NAB convention

The 1989 National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) convention in Las Vegas showcased the industry's up-to-the-minute technology. Pitched to the owners, managers, and engineers of commercial television and radio stations, the NAB event nonetheless also offers independents a handful of inducements to attend. And, for observers more attuned to ideology than technology, there are plenty of curiosities.

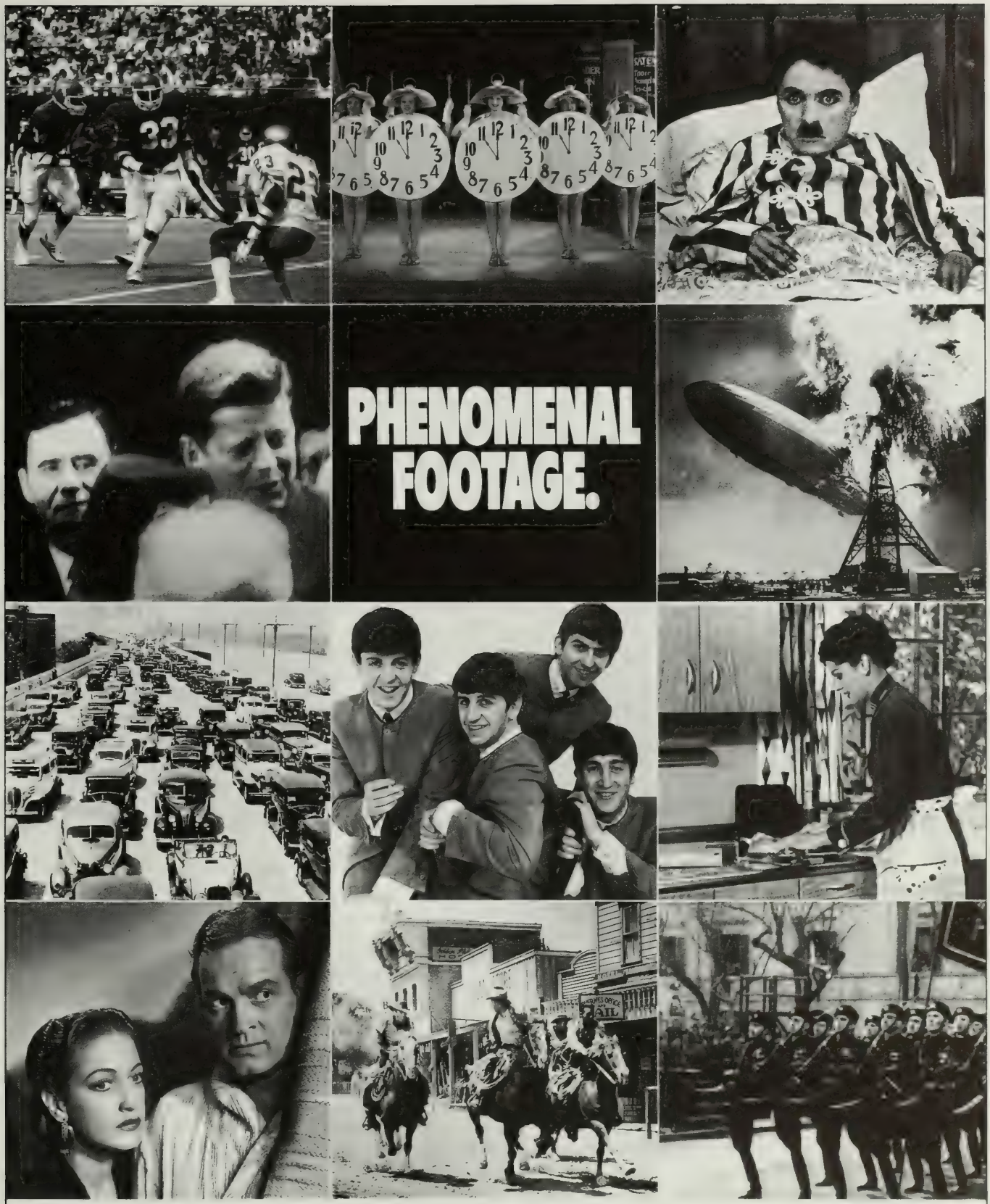
Who attends the NAB conference? One impressionistic gauge of interests was found where complimentary piles of trade magazines were offered. I counted 101 or so titles, like *Via Satellite* (cover story: "Dollars from Dishes"), but the stacks of *American Cinematographer* and *Washington Journalism Review* never needed restocking. Steenbeck and Nagra booths displayed their latest video-hybridized equipment, and you could find announcements for the second festival of Electronic Cinema. Like fundamentalist pilgrims in a Vegas casino, film purists at this convention could easily find themselves in their own special corner of hell.

Chicago documentary filmmaker Gordon Quinn, who enjoyed some roulette luck, last attended NAB in the late seventies, but has continued to track the market shift from 16mm to three-quarter-inch, driven by the TV news industry. Although distressed by the economic extinction of film, he was impressed this year by the industry's eagerness to showcase hi-band 8mm video as an origination format. He wondered if manufacturers' upgrading of consumer formats should impress independents who are interested in inexpensive yet professional video production.

NAB veteran Scott Jacobs runs IPA, a Chicago postproduction house serving independents. Keen on uncovering technological innovations to democratize television, Jacobs wants ways to cut costs for long-form documentaries. Jacobs came to Las Vegas with nine other IPA members, each scouting an assigned terrain of new hardware and software. Investing over $100,000 each year in new equipment, IPA treks to the NBA for an in-house shopping seminar.

Video artist Janice Tanaka has attended NAB every year for the past 10 years to sample innovations in this unique hands-on atmosphere where she can contact many companies under one roof. As head of Electronic Media at the University of Colorado, this year she was looking for affordable digital-format processing for her classes. But she was enthralled by the utterly unaffordable Harry system by Quantel—an all-digital processor, switcher, editor, and animator.

L.A. video artist Beverly Ginsburg works at the Long Beach Museum of Art cataloguing its extensive half-inch reel-to-reel video art collection from the sixties and seventies. At the recent National Alliance of Media Arts Centers conference in Rochester she met with other video art curators from around the country who shared concerns for preserving and transferring antiquated tape stocks. A month later at the NAB convention she was able to discuss the crisis with technical services repre-




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**At console, operators program positions for robot studio cameras on mock TV sets at the 1989 NAB convention in Las Vegas.**

sentatives from Sony's magnetic products division.

Social issues command a minor segment of the NAB's agenda. One panel promised to teach AM radio executives how their morning commuter shows can be "hot and legal." As the NAB calendar of events warned, "Your morning team may be inflicting emotional distress, invading privacy, violating wiretap laws, engaging in sexual harassment...and otherwise sailing your station into dangerously deep and steamy legal waters."

In one conference session, the Scientists' Institute for Public Information presented a sample of public service spots on AIDS as the background for an excellent discussion moderated by Washington, D.C.'s Commissioner of Public Health, Dr. Reed Tuckson. The advertised premise for the round table was "responsible broadcasting is good business." This bottom line appeal, however, exerted nominal pull on conventioneers. The sparse attendance at this session was pathetically disproportionate to the magnitude of the issue and broadcasters' unmatched but unmobilized power to constructively shape public awareness.

Down the hall a huge crowd of broadcasters subjected themselves to the inauguration of NAB's "free TV" campaign. This pep rally for executives was christened "Hooray for Television!" and opened with the blasting fanfare of Neil Diamond's rock anthem "America," revived after service in the Dukakis-for-President campaign. At "Hooray for Television" we learned that "free TV" was more prevalent than hot and cold running water in some parts of the country. A battery of slide projectors and a duo of scripted announcers barraged the standing-room-only gathering with such banalities as "Television is the proven choice whose fundamental value lies in its fundamental *value*." (A text prepared for delivery at another event included: "Radio is...*radio*. So...what is television?") Did you know that there are more TV sets than telephones in the United States? As dissolving slides projected a phantasmagoria of cascading dollars, the broadcasters were assured that "free TV is the superhighway to the up-scale audience."

The broadcasters at NAB seemed seriously nervous about cable, whose "ultimate goal is to become more like broadcast TV," according to the hype at "Hooray for Television." As a slide announced the topic of "Broadcast Bashing," the narrators beat up on the research by an unnamed "professor from Iowa," recently quoted in a *Wall Street Journal* article on advertisers' loss of faith in the efficacy of broadcast TV. On stage, slides testified, "What is not proven in the laboratory *is* proven in the real world of television." The "professor from Iowa" preoccupied discussion afterwards. Someone said the guy was misquoted. Someone else countered, "We have videotape of him on a cable network show" saying the same thing the newspaper said he said.

Need an overview of NAB? Hovering outside the convention hall was a Dumbo-sized blimp named Top Shot equipped with a broadcast quality, three-axis, gyrostabilized, aerial, three-chip CCD camera system. For an ideological overview in Las Vegas, though, irony is handy. In many curious instances, authors of public relations texts appropriated political imagery. The Television and Radio Political Action Committee, for example, states in its brochure that they exist to "exercise political freedom" and to "protect ALL our freedoms, including your right to broadcast." One exhibitor costumed a Black man in a convict outfit, accessorized with a mock ball and chain, to carry a sandwich board proclaiming, "It is time for animators around the world to join together and demand the tools which will set their imaginations free. Exercise *your* right. Become a Liberated Animator."

A Kodak press release noted the increased "choices" afforded to bored viewers by cable, VCRs, and remote control channel-changers which necessitate "boosting the visual content" of broadcast TV. "Production values are necessary to keep today's visually literate audiences interested in television programs." At a convention luncheon, NAB's president and CEO Edward O. Fritts attempted to inspire an industry-wide united front to protect "free television." Walter Cronkite was unveiled as the spokesperson to champion "free TV," a contra-cable reaction. "It is totally a democratic institution, available to virtually every American citizen," Fritts argued, adding, "Our broadcast system is a precious national resource that must be nurtured and preserved.... Congress created this system by conscious will.... We must educate the public that free TV is not a birthright.... We must and will restore fair competition to the video arts."

"Video art" may be spoken at NAB, but don't expect to see it in any sense of that term as used in the pages of *The Independent*. But do go to NAB to inspect the evolving technological universe for the moving image. Just budget some irony to spend as a tourist in this industry's ideological theme-park. Look for the guy in battle fatigues demonstrating his jungle-camouflaged "guerilla-camcorder." Check out the TV news desk dummies at the exhibit demonstrating robotic studio camera systems designed to depopulate the stations' off-air payroll. Delve into "taboo channels." And when you encounter "video machines" in Las Vegas casinos, don't expect them to speak NTSC, PAL. That Elvis impersonator on the strip is talkin' about TCB, not TBC.

*Bill Stamets is a freelance news photographer who shoots super 8 experimental documentaries on political campaigns.*

# Robert Richardson

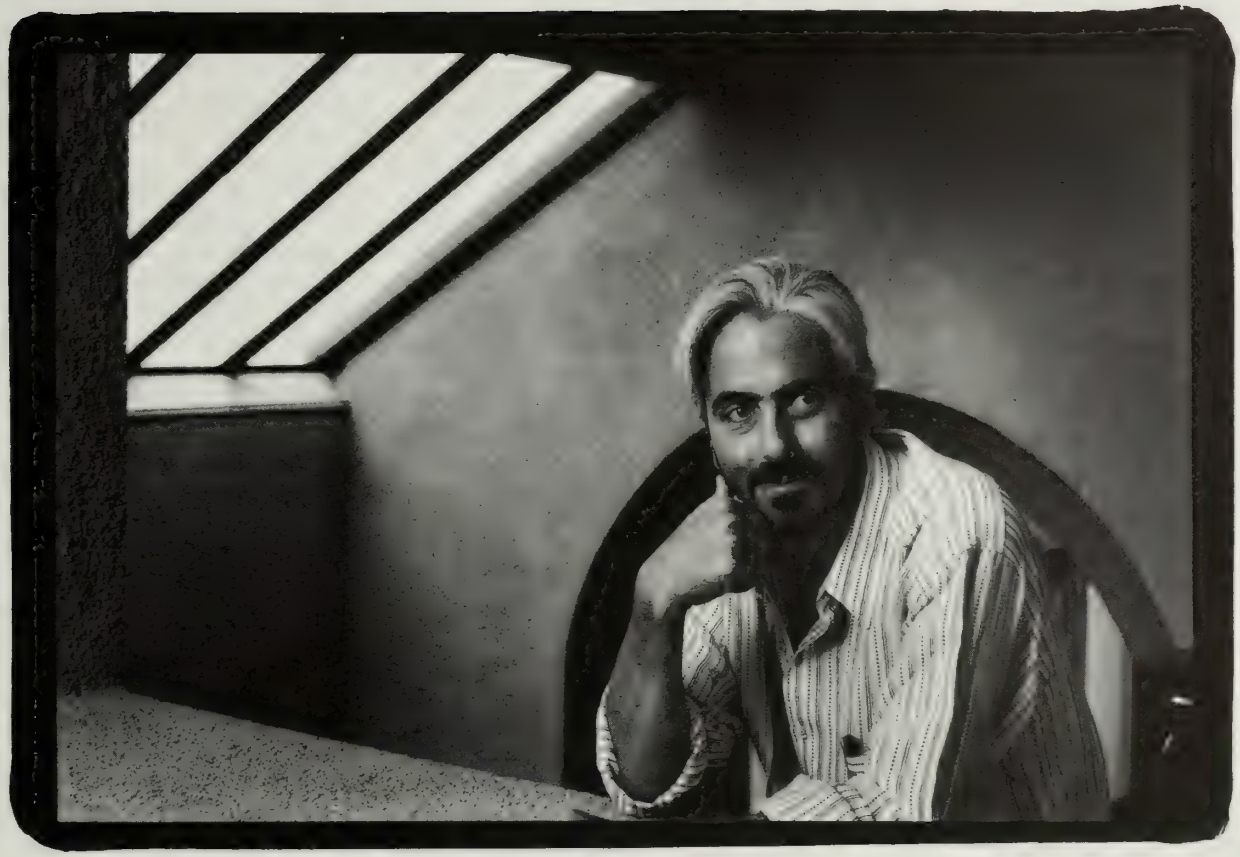


Photo: Gene Stein

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## on film:

"Filmmaking is like an architect's construction of a dream. You design a fantasy by translating words into moving images that have emotional impact. The choice of camera angle, movement, and lens can make an actor or actress seem either submissive or powerful. Emotions can be revealed or concealed with light, colors, and shadows. Moods and visual perspective can be altered by choosing a film stock that gives you more depth of field, less grain, richer blacks, or more contrast. That's all part of the grammar of filmmaking. But, all of these techniques should be transparent to the audience. It's important not to confuse visual cliches with artistic photography. If a choice had to be made, I would much rather shoot a good picture than a good-looking picture."

*Robert Richardson's credits include: "Salvador," "Platoon," "Wall Street," "Eight Men Out," "Talk Radio," and "Born on the Fourth of July."*

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# PAYING THE PIPER: MUSIC IN MOTION PICTURES

Todd Alan Price
and Gary Baddeley

Music has always been a part of our enjoyment of movies, and one is hard-pressed to think of a movie without music. Even in the days of silent pictures there was usually a house orchestra to dramatize the events on screen. Now the relationship between movies and music is even closer, with nearly every major film release accompanied by a soundtrack album and the score often containing songs performed and/or written by popular artists. The movie and the music promote each other, and the 1980s have seen such remarkable success stories as *Beverly Hills Cop* and *Dirty Dancing*, movies not released as traditional musicals but nevertheless relying heavily on popular musical soundtracks for their good fortune. There have also been some relative failures, such as Prince's *Under the Cherry Moon*, but these were still important to the movie/music axiom because of the near-total integration of the two media.

I

There are a number of ways in which a movie acquires its music, the most traditional being the original score composed by a specialist in the field. It has been estimated that perhaps 190 film composers are active,[1] although many specialize in television. Most people have heard of Henry Mancini or John Williams, but there are many lesser-known composers to whom the movie producer may turn. Composers are invariably represented by talent agencies, the foremost being Bart Milander, but William Morris, ICM, Triad, CAA, and others also represent composers. Composers are not cheap; their estimated fees may range from $50,000 to $200,000, although as in all areas of the business a lesser-known or neophyte composer may settle for substantially less, particularly where the score is for a low-budget production. Here the fee may be well under $20,000, and the services required more arduous.

It is common for the composer to receive 50 percent of publishing income as the writer's share and whatever percentage, if any, he or she can negotiate out of the publisher's share. If a soundtrack album is released—which is almost the norm today—the composer will generally receive another royalty of some kind, akin to an artist royalty, although he or she may only conduct rather than play an instrument. This royalty percentage will be similar to that of a recording artist and subject to the complex set of negotiations associated with recording contracts. In consideration of this compensation the composer will perform various services, usually including composing, orchestrating, arranging, conducting, and producing the score. Additionally, the composer may be required to produce a master recording for the soundtrack album. If this is at the expense of the composer it can seriously reduce the actual fee. This, however, is a negotiable issue between producer and composer. If the former is in the stronger bargaining position he or she may be able to demand that the composer produce and pay for the soundtrack album master.

Orchestration and conducting services are subject to American Federation of Musicians (AFofM) basic rates, which are complex and subject to change. The producer should check with the local chapter of the AFofM to learn the applicable rates for the score. Generally speaking, orchestration costs may be as high as $35,000, depending on the number of instruments used and the length of the score. AFofM rates apply to the specific services of orchestrating and conducting, in addition to the performance of music. Although the producer may be horrified at the thought of paying the composer union scale for these services, many solve the problem by incorporating the minimum wage required into the agreed-upon composing fee, with the written understanding that this fee covers any services subject to AFofM rates. Composing services are not subject to any minimum scale since composers are viewed as independent contractors and do not belong to the AFofM or any other union.

The composer will normally grant the right to use his or her name, likeness, and biography to the producer, who gives all-important main title, paid advertising, and soundtrack album credits in return. However, the composer almost never receives profit participation in the released motion picture.

It is uncommon for the composer to receive the agreed upon fee in its entirety prior to the performance of services, although payment of a portion of it may be expected. The producer will prefer to delay payment until the completed score is delivered but may have to make some initial payment followed by one or more interim payments. If the composer does not deliver on time the producer faces a crisis. The composer is often hired during postproduction, dangerously close to the scheduled release date of the picture. The producer cannot afford to set back this date, nor can the picture be released without a score. It may truly be said that time is "of the essence" in the agreement, and the producer should insist on this being stipulated. It should also be specified in the agreement that the composer's services are so unique that the loss of them would cause irreparable harm to the producer. In addition to money damages, an injunction may be sought to prevent the composer from working on other projects until the work for the producer has been completed.

The producer will insist on being granted all rights to the score, generally achieving this by stating in the agreement that the score will be a "work for hire," thus ensuring that the copyright will be owned by the producer for the duration of its term. This is normal practice, and the composer should not expect to be successful when negotiating this point. The composer does have some reserved rights, however, arising from the 1979 settlement of *Bernstein v. Universal Pictures, Inc.*, in which composers had attempted to gain a share of the copyrights. They did not fail entirely, however; now the producer must exploit the composition within a certain period of time, or else a "window" opens for the composer to exploit the music. The ownership rights remain with the producer, however. In practice, producers usually find a way to prevent the window from opening without fully exploiting the composition. Those limited rights that are reserved for the composer are severely limited, and may never actually accrue.

Finally, it should be remembered that everything is negotiable. The bargaining strength of the two parties always dictates the particular outcome of contract negotiations. What is outlined here merely indicates some of the norms and legal parameters.

II

The back catalogues of music publishers are increasingly becoming a favorite tool of producers or "music supervisor/coordinators." Many motion pictures use popular songs to evoke a feeling of the era in which the movie is set, whether it's 1959 or 1989. The traffic is not merely one-way, as sales of slow-selling discs often take off. Witness the success of Louis Jordan's *What a Wonderful World* after the cinematic release of *Good Morning, Vietnam*. This point has not been lost on the advertising world, whose use of sixties hits, in particular, is reaching extraordinary proportions.

Although the use of popular songs can boost the revenues of music publishers and record

1. Mark Halloran, "Film Composing Agreements: Business and Legal Concerns," in Donald Farber, ed., *Entertainment Industry Contracts* (New York: Matthew Bender, 1986), Sec. 184.01.

companies, both fully comprehend the potential gain which accrues to the movie producer through use of their songs, and they charge license fees accordingly. The producer needs more than one license to use a song. Most important is the synchronization (sync) license: Under the federal copyright act, the exclusive right to control the synchronization of a song with visual images is a separate and distinct right belonging to the publisher. In other words the song cannot be recorded on the movie soundtrack without such a license. A performance license, which is necessary in order to perform or exhibit the song in movie theaters, will ordinarily be included in the grant of rights in the sync license, although this is distinct from the latter.

The producer must negotiate with the publisher or the publisher's agent (often the Harry Fox Agency) as to the size of the fee and which rights are to be granted (theatrical, television, home video, and so on). Many factors affect the price of the license, such as the record sales of the song, how long ago it was a hit—if at all, the current income of the song, the reputation of the songwriter, the budget of the movie, and the importance of the song to the movie, to name a few. The sync license may cost between $1,000 and $50,000, or, exceptionally, fall outside those bounds. It is vital that the producer gains a grant of rights in perpetuity, or when the time comes for renewal of the license, an outlandish fee can be demanded.

Equally important is the grant of rights to exploit the songs not only in movie theaters, but in promotional trailers for screen, television, and radio; in all television formats (free, pay, cable, satellite); home video, soundtrack album, and accompanying music videos; and by all methods now or subsequently known. This explicit grant of rights in hereto unknown media will avoid Paramount Pictures' fate in a 1988 case in California (*Cohen v. Paramount Pictures Corp.*), where Paramount had been granted a synchronization license which made no mention of home video—this medium not having been marketed to the public at the time of the grant—or of any new media subsequently discovered. The federal court declined to construe Paramount's television rights as covering home video or to imply the grant as covering unknown media.[2]

Publishers are not unaware of the tremendous revenues generated by home video sales and will generally demand a separate fee for these rights. The form of this fee is hotly contested between producers and publishers, the former desiring a flat fee, as with other types of movie exhibition, and the latter preferring a per unit royalty system akin to the record industry. A very rough guide indicates a flat fee between $1,500 and $25,000, and royalties of $0.60 per song, per videogram (the industry term for a cassette or disc), or four percent of the wholesale selling price of the videogram, that amount being prorated between the various compositions. Producers should always negotiate video rights in advance (indeed, other rights, too). It is bad practice to await the home video release of the picture, since the publisher may then accurately assess how important the song is to the movie and perhaps charge a far higher fee than could initially be demanded. Rather than make an outright purchase of the video rights (the home video market may never actually be exploited), the producer may instead negotiate an option to purchase these rights within a fixed period for a stated price. The cost of acquiring such an option is far less than the cost of outright purchase.

Once the producer has the synchronization license he or she needs an actual recording of the song, which may be commissioned or exist as a previous recording. When choosing the latter a "master use" license will be required. This is in fact not one license but several, except in the case of a broad license covering all rights in all media. This license must be sought from the record company that owns the copyright to the recording. As with the sync license, rights to use the recording in different media may have to be acquired separately—i.e., theatrical and promotional, television, cable, home video, and so on. Home video may be subject to the same royalty disputes as mentioned above.

The cost of master use licenses generally falls in the same price range as sync license fees, although they have been known to reach astronomical heights. One method used by producers to avoid paying enormous sums is to commission a new recording. Obviously, this is not without cost, since even unknown musicians and vocalists may be subject to union minimum fees and recording costs can be considerable. Nevertheless, it may still be far cheaper than the real thing, and often a new recording will be so faithful to the original that the two are virtually indistinguishable. The federal copyright act clearly permits this, whatever compunction one might have about doing it, but the practice must now be regarded as suspect since the 1988 case *Midler v. Ford Motor Co.* found a sound-alike recording of a Bette Midler song to infringe Midler's rights in her voice. The infringement here was not one of the copyright of the original sound recording but of Midler's voice, which in itself is not copyrightable. The law is not fixed in this area, but producers should at least take care to distinguish a closely-copied recording from the original, possibly by disclaimer or by publicizing that this is a new recording, neither of which were done in the *Midler* case.

It *is* possible to commission a new recording of the song without it sounding exactly the same as the original. The cost of this option is unpredictable, because many factors affect the ultimate breakdown. Union musicians must be paid at the current AFofM rate, and vocalists are subject to Screen Actors Guild (SAG) and American Fed-

2. For a discussion of *Cohen v. Paramount*, see Robert C. Harris, "Home Video Case Jolts Motion Picture Industry," *The Independent*, August/September 1988, pp. 19-20.

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eration of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA) rates. If musicians—and vocalists—are well-known they may command high fees. There may also be record companies to negotiate with if the musicians are obligated to perform for them on an exclusive basis. Physical recording costs depend on the nature of the recording studio, the equipment needed, and the amount of time expended.

III

A further possibility entails commissioning various songwriters to compose original songs for the movie. A song written especially for a particular screenplay can add a dimension which would be impossible to achieve with pre-existing music. For instance, one of the most memorable scenes in Spike Lee's *School Daze* was the cast dancing to the E.U. song "Da Butt." Often the songwriter will be represented by a large music publisher, or may have his or her own publishing company. Either way the producer must negotiate for a share of the publishing rights and will generally have to settle for a copublishing agreement with the songwriter's publishing company, because this company may have engaged the writer on an exclusive basis (the writer will receive at least 50 percent of publishing regardless).

The fee demanded by the songwriter(s), who is often a performer as well, is in proportion to their popular reputation. However, the producer may negotiate a lower fee in a number of ways. The easiest method is to surrender some or all publishing rights to the songwriter's publisher (the songwriter commonly receives a percentage of the publisher's income). Since this income is contingent, it is less concrete than an up-front fee which may strain the producer's ability to keep within the budget. If all publishing rights are given up, the producer must be sure to attain synchronization and performance licenses for the songs as described above. Alternately, the producer may appeal to the artist by offering a part in the movie. Many popular artists have tried to make the leap from the recording studio to the silver screen, with varying success. If the songwriter/artist is tempted, a lower fee may be negotiated. The songwriter may be persuaded that including his or her song in the soundtrack will be such a positive career move that it would be advantageous to charge the producer a low fee. But if the songwriter is at the peak of his or her career, it may be difficult to hold sway with these arguments, and the choice of songwriter may have to be determined primarily by the budget available to the producer.

IV

If the producer does secure the services of a popular recording artist, the artist's record company may want to retain rights to release the song(s) and may be able to force the producer to allow this if the artist is tied to the company on an exclusive basis. The soundtrack album—and often the hit single—are of increasing promotional and financial importance to the producer of any movie today with a sizeable budget. Indeed, many independent film companies have had some success with movie soundtrack albums, such as New Line Cinema's *Hairspray*, released by MCA Records as both a single and an album.

If a particular recording artist is featured heavily in the soundtrack, the producer may find it advantageous to negotiate with that artist's record company over the release of a soundtrack album (thereby ensuring less resistance from the record company in allowing their artist to record and possibly a lower fee for the artist's services). However, the producer should be careful to gain rights to release the composition to which he or she acquires rights on a soundtrack album on *any* label, in case negotiations with the artist's record company become stalled or the record company becomes unable to release the album. This applies regardless of the method by which the producer has assembled the soundtrack, whether it is made up of a newly-composed original score, preexisting music, specially commissioned songs, or a combination of these.

At a later stage the producer may wish not to be bound to a particular record company, especially if a more advantageous deal can be found elsewhere. When acquiring rights to the compositions comprising the soundtrack, the producer must be scrupulously careful to assign artist and album producer royalties only on the same basis as his or her royalties are defined with the record company. Where there are several artists and/or album producers, care must be taken to prorate the royalties. It can be disastrous if the artist/album producer royalties are defined as a percentage of 100 percent of the suggested retail selling price while the producer's royalty only comes from 90 percent of suggested retail.

Typically a record company might give 14 to 18 percent of 100 percent of the suggested retail price to the producer as a royalty on album sales.[3] Out of this royalty the producer must pay the artist (including the composer of an original score) the agreed upon artist royalty (prorated if there are several artists) and the producer(s) of the album the agreed upon royalty for their services. These royalties may be in the range of six percent and two percent respectively.[4] Additionally, the producer must pay re-use fees, according to AFofM scales, to those musicians whose work is included on the movie soundtrack *and* the soundtrack album, since this is a re-use of that performance in a different, unbargained for medium. If the re-use fees are likely to be large, as will be the case with a soundtrack recorded by a large orchestra, it may be cheaper to have the soundtrack rerecorded abroad by non-AFofM musicians.

The movie producer is in the position of publisher when he or she owns a portion of or all of the publishing rights to a soundtrack. When a song is exploited there are various ways in which income may flow to the music publisher. Aside from the

3. Lionel Sobel, "Soundtrack Music," *Entertainment Law Reporter*, Vol. 7, No. 8 (1985), p. 7.

4. *Ibid.*

album sale royalty (which is not publishing income), the producer may receive a royalty derived from the use of musical compositions on records, tapes, and compact discs. These are known as "mechanical" royalties. The record company will either pay a statutory or negotiated royalty to the publisher(s). The songwriter then receives a share, usually 50 percent of the amount received by the publisher plus whatever may be negotiated in addition.

The second way in which income flows to the publisher is through performance rights. They are split into two parts, "grand" and "small." Grand rights are those pertaining to dramatic performance. What constitutes "dramatic" is a contentious issue, and legal advice should generally be sought where there is uncertainty. These rights are directly granted by the publisher for a negotiable fee. Small rights income constitutes payment for radio and television broadcast, performance in arenas, nightclubs, bars, and so on. The performing rights societies—in the United States: American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI), and SESAC (originally the Society of European Stage Authors and Composers)—collect these royalties and distribute half directly to the songwriters and half to the publisher.

If the soundtrack is popular, the producer as publisher may grant licenses in the compositions to other would-be users, in the same way as he or she would license compositions to which he or she did not own the copyright. The songwriter would usually receive half these fees. Lastly, there may be print income (sheet music), which is insignificant nowadays but should not be ignored. Unlike mechanical income, the publisher does not divide print income equally with the writer, the latter receiving a rather low fraction for no other reason than industry custom.

Whatever the importance of music to motion pictures, the producer may be somewhat alarmed at the amount of work involved in assembling a soundtrack, not to mention the cost. For this reason many producers choose to hire a music supervisor and attorney, who will take care of all the negotiations involved. There is, of course, added cost in the form of the attorney's fees. It is something the producer should consider carefully, however, because music may make or break the movie. Few producers will treat music as an afterthough, nor should they, for it is likely only to increase in importance as the two media become further enmeshed.

*Todd Alan Price practices entertainment law in New York City with a concentration in motion picture and music clientele, and is an instructor of Film and Entertainment Law at the School of Visual Arts.*

*Gary Baddeley is a third-year student at New York University School of Law and a law clerk in the office of Todd Alan Price.*

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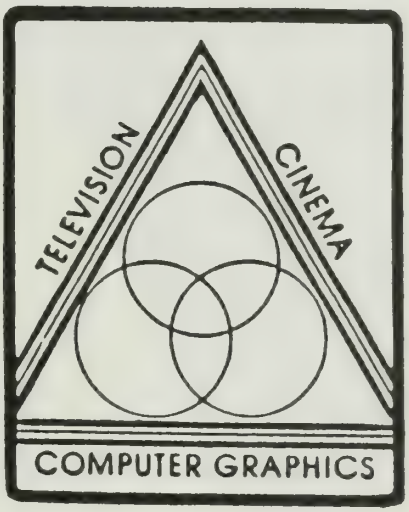
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# MULTIPLE CHOICES: A SURVEY OF VIDEO RECORDING FORMATS

Rick Feist

Unable to afford skilled technical staff, the majority of independent producers must assume the role of technical director on their projects. Without the requisite experience or hopelessly overburdened with other aspects of production, the independent producer tends to be disaster prone.

This article is one in a series, written by staff members of the Standby Program, a nonprofit video access and education program dedicated to providing artists and independent producers with sophisticated video services they can afford. Standby's technicians are artists themselves and therefore offer vital understanding and sympathetic collaboration. Since 1983, works made possible by Standby have been broadcast on the Public Broadcasting Service, as well as European and Japanese television, and have been exhibited in museums and galleries worldwide. The information presented here and in future articles should help you make appropriate technical decisions to suit your aesthetic and budgetary needs.

□ □ □

There are so many video formats in use that it's not worth counting. As you read this, even more formats are being developed. Manufacturers competing to dominate markets have placed the emphasis on specialization and technological advancement at the cost of standardization and compatibility.

Some formats are even incompatible with themselves. Just as the VHS format seemed on the verge of becoming a standard, its makers introduced Super VHS, which is "back compatible" only. Translated: older standard VHS decks cannot play back tapes recorded in the S-VHS mode. Betamax, Super Betamax, and Betamax-ED are back compatible to each other, producing recordings that the earlier generation decks cannot play back. The "enhanced" modes work only with special cassettes (usually with metal particle tape). The record/playback mode of these machines is determined by notchings in the tape cassette housing, allowing "Super/Hi/S/ED" decks to make standard recordings on normal cassettes.

The Sony Corporation is alone responsible for the proliferation of more than a dozen different video recording formats. Sony recently added an SP designation to the new models of the venerable 3/4" U-matic and the Betacam formats. SP means "superior performance" and indicates a greater bandwidth recording (higher resolution). SP machines use a cassette with metal tape (upon which older-style machines are unable to record, since the notching in the cassette housing is different). Betacam SP offers a full 90 minutes of recording, but on cassettes bigger than those that fit into the original Betacam decks. Otherwise, tapes recorded in SP mode will play back on standard decks, if without any resolution enhancement.

D1 (known colloquially as 4:2:2) and D2 (no nickname at the time of this writing) both record video digitally—although incompatibly. Both are subject to "zits," a technical term referring to the dot-like dropout they exhibit. Hi-def or HDTV is under development on three continents, and each design will be fully incompatible with the others.

Who needs more formats?

□ □ □

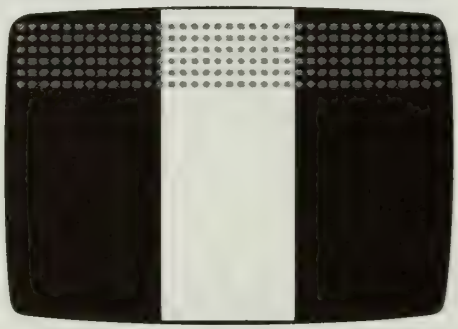
Formats are aimed at different segments of projected markets. Formats used to be rigidly divided by a class system; now their intermingling has grown common. Most producers now arrive at the postproduction studio with source tapes in several formats. The former standard, which constituted an interformat edit—from 3/4" to a 1" master—has been replaced with the multi-format edit, incorporating source tapes of several formats. Unfortunately, in an on-line editing session this means booking more machines and paying more. Above all, formats are profitable.

When selecting a format for recording, don't let a few letters like SP or the prefixes "super" or "hi" obsess you. The resolution improvement such systems promise is far less significant than the hyperbole suggests. "Super" decks generally provide improved black and white resolution but do little for the color and time base stability of the recording. Professional formats still produce better recordings for intermediate generations. The combination VHS to Betacam to 1" is better than S-VHS to S-VHS to 1".

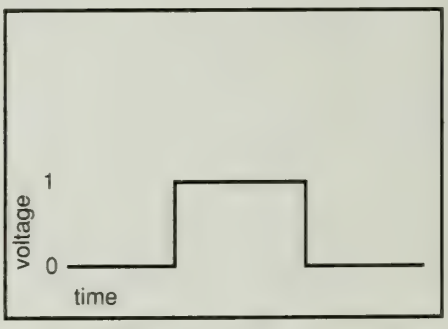
Formats allow different methods for recording video. Filmmakers await the image resolution of hi-def and settle for 1" or 3/4" transfers. The portability of video 8 or VHS allows low-budget documentary production, but their low resolution



A video image consisting of a wipe between black and white.



The picture is actually composed of 525 adjacent lines, which are scanned from left to right, beginning with the top line and ending with the bottom line.




The voltage change produced by the scan of one line of video. The voltage produced is lower in darker areas and higher in brighter areas.

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is unsuitable for graphics or titles. D1 (digital video) is the best way to preserve paint box work (in component form), but too cumbersome to find regular use elsewhere.

There is no format for recording known that can "improve" the video picture. Every copy (generation) suffers quality loss. Home video formats are designed to make the poorest copies. When Sony introduced Betamax in 1974 and was quickly sued for copyright infringement by Universal Studios, Sony contended that their machine was designed only for "time shifting" (recording TV programs for later viewing), not for copying and distribution.

The quality of a video recording format depends upon how that format records the video signal—and every format records it differently.

□ □ □

The basis of video recording is the variation of the black and white brightness level across each of the 525 lines that comprise one video frame. Starting at the top of the frame, each television line is scanned sequentially from left to right. The scan is so rapid that the raster produced appears as a full picture to the eye. The resulting signal is known as the luminance, or Y in scientific symbology. At the onset of the medium of television, black and white TV cameras worked exclusively with Y, and Y was the only signal that TVs translated into pictures.

In the 1950s (before the birth of video recording) selection of a color standard became imminent. And the industry needed it to be compatible with all those TVs that only knew Y signals.

Color video originates (in a camera) as an R-G-B (red-green-blue) signal, drawn from three separate sensors for the individual red, green, and blue brightness levels along the raster scan. From the mixture of these primaries, all the colors in the visible spectrum can be produced. The color monitor/television separates the video into the same R-G-B form to drive its three electron beams that scan the TV cathode ray screen. What happens between these points varies widely, especially if recording is involved.

All three signals (R, G, and B) combined in proportion create the Y signal. By subtracting the blue signal from the total brightness (B-Y), and likewise the red signal (R-Y), two new offspring, I and Q, were born. I and Q contain a record of the "color difference" and act in combination upon a color subcarrier (3.58 mhz) to form the C (chrominance or color) signal. C is then added to the Y (brightness) signal. The circuitry that performs this transformation of three signals into one is called an encoder. And from all this a new set of initials emerges victorious—NTSC composite video (NTSC stands for the National Television Systems Committee).

A black and white monitor ignores the C or chrominance. A color monitor decodes the C signal from the Y signal, and further the I and Q signals from C. The Y signal, the total of the three primaries, is compared to I and Q; the orginal R-G-B values are deduced. If you can't sort all these signals out, a color monitor can.

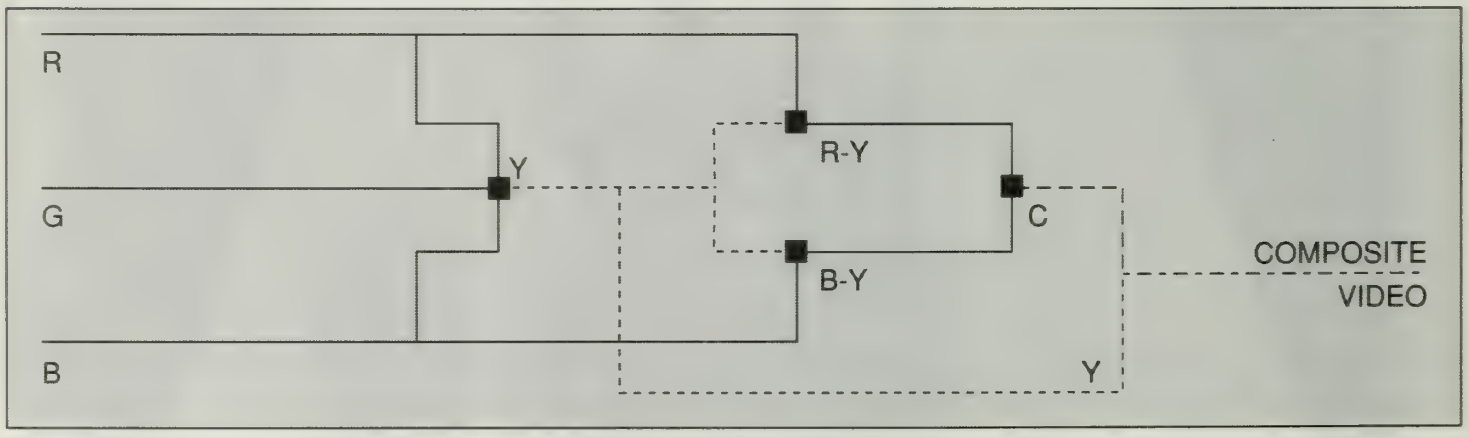
NTSC composite video recorded directly is known as highband. Highband requires recording a large bandwidth, or signal range. Its resolution is greater, and the machinery is more expensive (1" is highband).

The high frequency of the color signal cannot be recorded directly by 3/4" or any of the home video formats. Therefore the C (chrominance) is converted to a lower frequency for recording and converted back to the higher frequency during playback. Such a lowband video recorder depends on a mystery called heterodyning. Heterodyning is the conversion to and from the color subcarrier frequency (the divine number 3.58 mhz, almost 4 million cycles per second) to a lower value (629 or 688 khz, some six hundred thousand cycles). Because of all these shenanigans, the color is no longer coherent with the brightness signal. Look closely at such a recording on a monitor and you will see the color offset from the outlines and contours of the picture.

Lowband formats suffer severe generation loss when copied or dubbed. The introduction of Y/C systems (S-VHS, ED-Betamax, and hi-8mm) function much as the dub mode connectors on 3/4" U-matic and offer a little improvement. The video (still heterodyned) is not fully encoded during playback, and two wires are used to separately pass the Y and C signals directly between machines of the same format.

Component video bypasses most of the color encoding process altogether by recording three channels of video simultaneously. In this system, R-G-B is not recorded directly. Instead, one channel records the Y (luminance); the other two record the two "color difference" signals (R-Y and B-Y). By postponing the encoding of the NTSC color until playback, the quality of the color signal is improved. This mode of recording is present in Betacam, M, M2, and D1 formats. The B-Y and R-Y color signals require less bandwidth than the Y signal. Therefore, component systems are also know as 4:2:2 systems.

Computers record video graphics in scores of different ways based on storing digital values of R-G-B. Personal computers with a video output, although capable of driving a monitor, are often not stable enough to record. That depends upon the encoder used. If the video is non-interlace, its horizontal raster scan is not synchronized to the




**Composite video is single channel (one wire) color video, which is derived from three separate color signals; red, green, and blue (R-G-B). The red, green, and blue signals are first combined by addition to create the Y or black and white brightness signal; Y is then separately compared to the red signal (R-Y) and the blue signal (B-Y). The resulting color difference signals are joined to form C, the color signal. Finally, the C signal is combined with the Y signal to form composite video. Component video systems record the B-Y and R-Y separately, and the final encoding of the composite signal is postponed until playback.**



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pulses of the control track, the sync pulses which mark the beginning of each new frame. The picture breaks up when recorded by a broadcast format. Interlace video distinguishes between odd and even fields (which together form a frame), meshes the fields more exactly, and provides a sharper image. A standard video output will be specified as RS-170A.

### Common Formats

**One-inch C** is the standard broadcast format. It is the recommended format for mastering purposes. One-inch tapes may be copied several generations without a quality loss as noticeable as a single 3/4" generation. One-inch tape comes in standard lengths of 30, 60, and 90 minutes, but may be cut to any length. Allow two minutes at either end for thread-up and color bars.

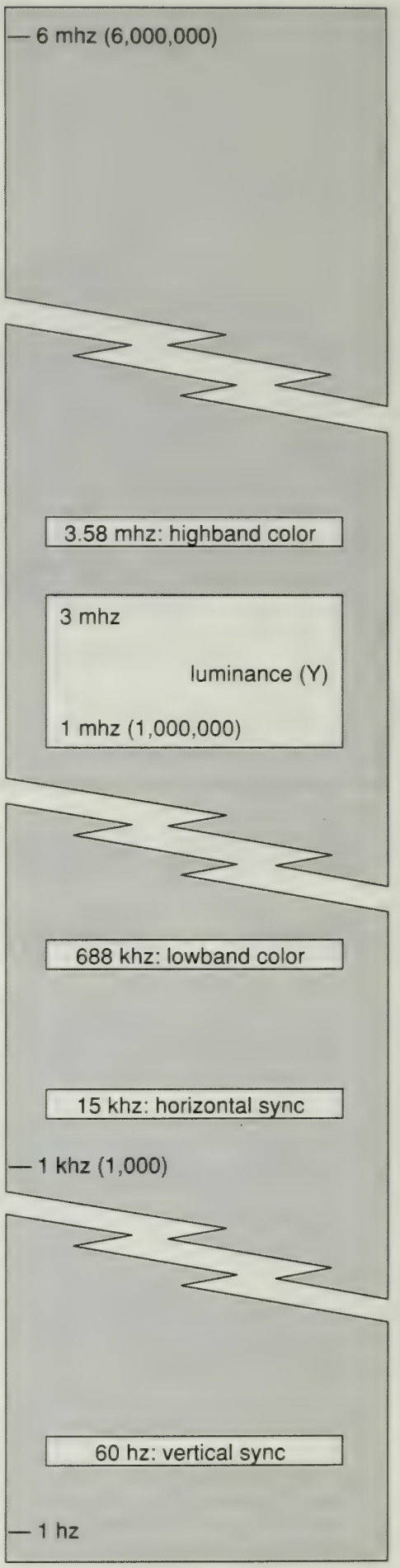
**Betacam** is a broadcast production format utilizing a Beta-size cassette. Though Betacam is only 1/2" in width, its video signal quality is nearly as good as 1". Betacam records color information in component signals (Y, R-Y, B-Y), providing better color resolution in playback and copying. Betacam is an excellent choice for making layoff reels or transfers, since the cassettes are a manageable size and weight. The main drawback of this format is that Betacam cassettes are available only in 20 or 30 minute lengths, and most camcorders (camera and recorder combined) will only accept cassettes this long.

**Betacam SP**, an enhanced version of Betacam, uses special cassettes up to 90 minutes in length. Betacam SP records a wider bandwidth (better luminance resolution) and adds two channels of hi-fi sound (see below). The cassettes use metal tape stock and are significantly more expensive. N.B. Betacam is incompatible with the Betamax home video format.

**3/4" U-matic** was originally introduced as a home video format, although it is now considered an "industrial" or "professional" format. Industrial grade 3/4" decks (5850 and 2860, etc.) do not produce broadcastable images directly and have headswitching (a small line of dropout below safety cutoff on most monitors). Time code must be recorded on an available audio channel to allow U-matic tapes to be used in computerized editing.

**BVU 3/4" U-matic** is the broadcast quality 3/4" format. BVUs do not produce headswitching. A BVU deck may be equipped with the means to produce address track time code. This is only possible at the time of the original recording. In the 3/4" format, address track time code cannot be applied to material already recorded and time code must be placed on one of the two audio channels.

**U-matic SP** is available in both industrial and broadcast 3/4" models. Tapes recorded on an SP machine should play back in any 3/4" VCR, but without the SP resolution enhancement.



**The "sync" signals are recorded at the lowest frequencies; these signals control the alignment of lines and frames for the CRT display. The Y, or luminance, is the black and white signal. The resolution of the image is determined by the bandwidth of the recording, which may range from 1 mhz (VHS) up to 3 mhz (1").**

**The C signal is the color or chrominance signal. A highband VTR will record C at the color subcarrier frequency 3.58 mhz. A lowband VTR employs a color under system, converting the chrominance to a lower frequency (e.g., 688 khz) for recording and back to 3.58 mhz for playback. The process is known as heterodyning.**

**VHS, S-VHS, Betamax, ED-Betamax,** and **video 8 home video** formats remain a common tool of independent production. These formats can produce a fine original recording but suffer increased noise and time base instability when used for copying. Originals in the small formats—whether VHS, S-VHS, Betamax, ED-Betamax, or video 8—are not stable enough to "gen-lock" in an on-line edit. They must be transferred or bumped-up to a broadcast format—3/4", Betacam, or 1".

Many home video machines record **hi-fi audio**. Machines that do are so marked. Hi-fi audio is recorded by the rotating video heads, providing better frequency response. Picture is the potential drawback here. If video is inserted by editing, the hi-fi soundtracks will be erased or replaced. All of these machines also record audio on the conventional audio tracks to maintain compatibility with non-hi-fi machines. Broadcast machines are almost never equipped to record sound this well, although their regular audio tracks sound better than conventional home video sound tracks.

### Other formats:

**Quad**, the original video format, records on a tape two inches wide. Once the only format available, quad is now obsolete and hard to find.

**IVC**, a two-inch helical format of high quality, now virtually extinct.

**One-inch A** format appeared briefly before 3/4" U-matic and soon disappeared.

**One-inch B** format is still used extensively in Europe. Because of its segmented helical scan, the picture can only be seen at play speed, and the tape cannot be searched or scanned. This format is not common here.

**1/2" EIA/EIAJ** are reel-to-reel formats that were common before the introduction of 3/4".

*Rick Feist is an on-line editor and a member of the Standby Program. Also contributing to the preparation of this article were Standby associates Marshall Reese and Lisa Guido.*

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# Media Education:

## It's Academic

### The Gulf between Theory and Production in Film Education, and How to Rethink It

*Annie Goldson*

In the bathroom of a liberal arts university, I read what was, presumably, a student's etching:

SEM
IOT
ICS
DES
TRO
YSF
ILM

Subsequently, the first comment was scratched out, and answered with a second: "O grow up, it does not." The dialogue was then painted over, but the indentation remained discernible under the new beige coat. Banality can be telling. As inconsequential as this exchange may seem, it has implications that extend beyond its room of origin.

The more I pondered the first phrase "semiotics destroys film" the more interpretations it triggered. Does "film," for instance, refer to avant-garde production (for the want of a better term) or does it mean mainstream cinema, i.e., Hollywood? What process is being destroyed here, film watching or film production—and, by extension, video production? And by "semiotics" is the author of the graffiti referring to semiotics proper, the field extending from Peirce and Saussure often defined loosely as the "science of signs," the study of social practices such as gesture, fashion, or popular culture? Or does the term semiotics refer to that admixture of feminist studies, Marxism, structuralism, poststructuralism, Afro-American studies, postmodernism, deconstruction, etc. that is frequently dubbed "Theory"? Given its breadth and contradictory directions, perhaps the only way to define theory is specifically, according to each institution—the mingling of the fields and interests of dispensing professors. Or even more narrowly, as a series of texts selected by an individual reader. In fact, the only point of agreement about theory seems to be that it coalesced as a field of study in the United States after translations of European authors such as Foucault, Derrida, Lacan, Kristeva, and others became widely available in the 1960s and 1970s. Influential, too, are the works of British theorists, among them Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, Laura Mulvey, and Stephen Heath, .

I bring up this mesh of interpretations to indicate how complex the relations between "semiotics" and "film" are. In addition, the graffiti acts as a prelude to my discussion, which is, for the most part, an examination of the relation of production to theory within both upper level education and more generally in the independent scene.

Some might say that the influence of theory on production is of minor consequence, not worth serious consideration. However, I would argue against this position for reasons that may appear contradictory. First, theory has significance because of the very strength of its ideas; analyses of gender, class, and ethnicity in culture that have been debated for the last decade, for instance, have had resonance for many artists and producers. Even if artists do not directly read theoretical texts, theoretical concepts generally filter into the everyday language of their milieu. In this capacity, then, it could be said that theory functions as part of praxis, a Marxist term that implies a surpassing of the distinction between production and theory. Within praxis, practice is informed by theory, and also (to a lesser extent), practice informs theory. Within praxis theory and production operate in relation, and thus praxis does, arguably, hold the seeds of an alternative political culture.

Theory's second kind of influence is not so laudable. It is ironic, given the political implications and aspirations of the theories under discussion, that it is still mostly the privileged classes in the United States who have access to an education that teaches theory and who, through this exposure, can incorporate current theoretical concerns into their work. This is not to blame students nor to suggest that anyone should be denied access to knowledge—certainly not those that already receive it—however, a minority of students use their privilege to remind others of their lower rank in the educational hierarchy.

In order to understand these complex and sometimes contradictory developments, I will roughly chart the terrain within universities, colleges, and art schools where the intersection between film and theory occurs. First, theory frequently takes a mass cultural text—such as a Hollywood film or a television program—as its object of study, examining the ways in which meanings (ideas, values, beliefs) within it are expressed and how these meanings are received and understood. Film studies, and increasingly television studies, have become established within most university curricula.

A second link between production and theory is less systematically taught, less confined to academic institutions. It is best described as dialectical—the form of relationship creating praxis—aiming to challenge the control over cultural production that mass media, in particular, the television and film industries, exercises within society. Theory, so it goes, reveals the mechanics of mainstream production in such a way that the independent producer can challenge mass media representations through his or her own work. Thus, the current concerns of theory—ideological analysis, constructions of narrative, the representation of women and the cultural "other," and so on—are manifest in a body of independent production that issues an implicit challenge to the products of the mass media.

How this approach to independent production is taught—the idea of "learning" seems appropriate only for the technical aspects of production, "absorbing" may be more useful for discussions of conceptual and theoretical education—varies from institution to institution. For instance, students may be exposed to theory and incorporate it into their work because of the influence of a single artist/teacher who has infiltrated a traditional communications department or film school. Or they may pursue formal and theoretical issues in their projects in a department that remains hostile to their attempts. Only at a few private universities and art schools that privilege experimentation over vocation are students encouraged to work in both theory and production treated as a dual and connected exploration.

# A Special Issue

Institutions in the United States have not nurtured the development of a dialectic between theory and production. Indeed, the gap between these areas is apparent even when there are shared political interests. Take, for example, one of the first major television studies conferences, held at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee last year. It is to the credit of the organizers that they gathered both theorists and producers into a single auditorium. However, the conference was distinctly lopsided. On one hand, all the theorists present, most of whom teach at universities and write for academic journals, delivered papers that focused on commercial television—individual programs, the "flow" of programs, issues of audience, the history and sociology of television, and so on—but there were no network television producers present. On the other hand, the producers screening their work at the conference were all independents who rarely, if ever, show on commercial TV. Confronting a history of the division of theory and practice, the two groups spoke at cross purposes and found little common ground. Worse, the screenings of independent work were scheduled before the first panel in the morning, at lunchtime, while most people were in the dining room away from the monitors, and after the close of the day's formal sessions where papers were presented. Only the most stalwart and loyal had the stamina to remain in the hall.

In the broader cultural arena, the separation of interests between production and theory bcomes even more pronounced, especially when compared to the media and artistic community in other industrialized countries. Great Britain's Channel Four, for example, with its mandate to encourage innovative, diverse, and minority-orientated programming, was established in direct consultation with theorists such as Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall—crucial figures on the cultural left—who helped shape its programming policies. In West Germany, too, production and theory are more closely linked in the public sphere. Alexander Kluge, who recently toured the United States, is both a filmmaker and a theorist, as well as being a lawyer, writer of fiction, and active in organizing alternative distribution networks.[1] A former student of Theodor Adorno and other Frankfurt School theorists, Kluge and his production group epitomize an unified approach to praxis scarcely conceivable in the U.S.

It is easy to point a finger and suggest why this process of exchange has been retarded here. Sweeping generalizations can be made about the history of anti-intellectual bias, the effects of individualism and entrepreneurship, the periodic gutting of progressive movements, etc.—all factors that are significant and no doubt frame the relative absence of a broad-based alternative political culture. Rather than detailing this cultural history, however, I want to narrow my discussion, continuing to tease out some of the specific hostilities between production and theory.

One problem seems to be that theory as taught in the United States exhibits almost a total insularity. The flourishing of theory has coincided with a period of extreme specialization in academia. As Russell Jacoby suggests, until the 1950s intellectuals in the U.S. were more "public," frequently earning a living by writing for journals aimed at a general reading public.[2] In short, they were not necessarily academics, and their ideas were accessible—and circulated. Today, most of these publications have closed. One of the few places of employment for intellectuals are the universities. But these jobs come with attendant pressures—professionalism, competition, and the demands of qualifying for and attaining a tenured position. The final judges—those with the power to confer or deny tenure—are not the general reading public, but a group of one's colleagues. Thus, academics involved in film and television studies frequently tailor their work for the specialists in their own fields. In this system alliances between intellectuals and artists seem part of a bygone era. Simply stated, many theorists studying culture are not concerned with independent film and video. Instead, they concentrate on mass cultural forms.

In what appears as a series of reciprocal moves, independent producers frequently resist the implications of theory. One belief still held dear is that film or video, as a work of art, is above or beyond theory. Reflecting a legacy of modernism and the concept of an avant-garde, many art schools continue to confer a quasi-mystical status on art objects. They teach young artists that each work is unique, symbolic, and visionary, its privilege rendering it distinct from other cultural products. The subsequent mystique surrounding art is inevitably tainted by theoretical analysis, the process of creativity interrupted by mere thought.

A parallel attitude toward theory can be found in a supposedly opposite stance—the predominant position taken at major film and television schools, as well as within media industries. In this case, films and videotapes are intended to entertain or engage—and, finally, to sell. Such work seen as "beneath theory," implying that, as a quality, entertainment is value-free and universal. Popularity becomes justification—and a weapon, if necessary, against theorists. True, mainstream cinema and television provide audiences with diversion, comfort, and security. In the process, however, they also produce consumers and are intricately implicated in commodity culture. Mass media can never "simply" function as entertainment.

If the majority of art schools teach that art is transcendent and reified, most industry schools take popularity as the bottom line. Theory clashes with both positions in its insistence that no cultural product exists outside the social order. Whether it is considered practice or counterpractice, avant-garde or mainstream, any film or videotape is constructed through its social and political context—even if it presumes to ignore it.

There is another form of resistance, however, which is harder to articulate. Some producers, who neither reify art nor celebrate entertainment, still exhibit an aversion to theory—or perhaps more accurately, a resentment towards how theory has been deployed. If theory is taken literally, it demarcates a very small space within which to work, a gap between art and entertainment that could be labelled "theoretically correct." Thus, rather than operating dialectically in relation to production, theory becomes prescriptive, shaping work into an increasingly standardized mold.

It is difficult to say why this move towards conformity has developed or state where it actually occurs. At the risk of sounding subjective, I would describe it more as an atmosphere that hangs over the independent scene. Certainly, in educational settings anyway, a substantial proportion of those exposed to theory seem particularly susceptible to its pressures. As a result, they can become very judgemental of each other, and those whose work is "theoretically unacceptable" are met with cool derision. Thus, an atmosphere of anxiety has developed, which has had a number of detrimental effects. Real formal experimentation is curtailed in favor of directly derivative work that reproduces that which has already been deemed as correct. Students copy the methods of independent producers that have already received critical attention. Productions that appear conventional are

readily dismissed. Spontaneous responses or critiques are derided for being naive rather than being analyzed in a constructive manner. And critical acceptance rather than oppositional practice seems to be a primary goal.

Judith Williamson has suggested that this new atmosphere of restraint operating in the independent scene could well be the result of the "whole-70s-theoretical-practice-as-part-of-practice-thing."[3] Theory's positioning of art as neither transcendent nor transgressive, but merely another text has been interpreted to mean that the critical text and the created object are one and the same. In the rush to close the creative/critical divide, Williamson observes that the dialectic between theory and production, which gives the cultural left is political force, was squeezed out of the picture, thus leading to the conformist tendencies described above.

In addition, I think that the pressure to be "theoretically correct" has to be seen in the light of the class inequities in U.S. education. As I stated earlier, who receives a progressive education and gets exposed to theory is a significant question. The nonvocational orientation of theory has several effects: it flourishes in private colleges and universities, and, when available in state schools, it is students who can afford to be less concerned about careers that are attracted to such a course of study. A superior education, no matter how "progressive," can be used by some as a badge of privilege. Intimidation can be exercised on yet another front—cultural rather than economic. At worst, the superior attitude exuded by the "theoretically correct" can twist the interaction between theory and independent production away from a radical intervention in culture to a consolidation of power. It is here that the contradictions appear greatest. Some of the primary concerns of theory—in particular, ethnicity, class, and, to a lesser degree, gender—are deployed in work that is used against the very groups it "discourses" about.[4]

Although theory is often regarded as esoteric, there are big issues and even bigger institutions at stake here. I am not suggesting, however, that the outlook is wholely bleak. There are also encouraging developments, which may appear disparate but which could contribute to a more viable alternative political culture. Expanding distribution through cable satellite technology holds the promise of a greater democratization of media—which would include, hopefully, not just "social issue" media, but also film and video that challenges the boundaries of formal conventions. There are signs, too, that cultural studies may be joining a rapidly expanding video curriculum in public high schools. At the same time, universities are beginning to acknowledge that video and film production is a legitimate field of study, and hiring more artists to teach these subjects. If such inroads into institutions continue, perhaps schools will function more successfully as a meeting ground for production and theory—together producing education and praxis—rather than narrow academic specialization that continues to be exclusive.

## Notes

1. For a lengthy treatment of Kluge's filmmaking and his theoretical writings, see Yvonne Rainer and Ernest Larsen, "'We Are Demolition Artists': An Interview with Alexander Kluge," *The Independent*, Vol. 12, No. 5 (June 1989), and Karen Rosenberg, "Reading New German Cinema," *ibid.*

2. Russell Jacoby, *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe* (New York: Noonday Press; Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1987).

3. Judith Williamson, "Two Kinds of Otherness: Black Film and the Avant-Garde," *Screen*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (Autumn 1988).

4. I have purposely deemphasized gender here, since, in my experience, women are not generally discriminated against on the basis of gender within cultural studies and production courses at colleges with established cinema/television studies departments. This may be a result of the strong presence of women's studies departments in these schools, as well as a greater assertiveness on part of the younger female student body.

Thanks to Peggy Ahwesh, Chris Bratton, Alex Juhaz, and Neil Lazarus for their feedback and encouragement.

*Annie Goldson is a video producer, writer, and teacher.*

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# Dear Sirs...

## A Letter on Textbook Sexism

Ron Whittaker, Author
Danilo Purlia, Product Manager
Mayfield Publishing Company
Mountain View, California

*Dear Mr. Whittaker and Mr. Purlia,*

Thank you for sending me a review copy of your new text, *Video Field Production*. Since I teach two video production courses and a large introductory communication course (over 280 students) at the University of California, San Diego, I am always on the lookout for good textbooks.

I appreciate that the technical language in your book is, as you mention in your note, "straightforward and jargon-free." However, there are other aspects of a textbook, besides the rhetoric, which I check when preparing my courses. I was particularly distressed to see the role of women in the illustrations in your book.

I should have been alerted right away even before opening the book. The cover photograph has 11 men actively engaged in news-gathering. There is an out-of-focus head in the bottom of the frame and a head tilted down mid-frame both of which could, I suppose, be open to gender interpretation, but the look of the book cover is definitely that of a white man's world, clearly defined. The rear is closed off with a police car and the front with a police "Do Not Cross" ribbon. The cover says, in essence, field production is serious business, and the men (white) are in charge.

In case I missed that intro, I would early on (page 3) be alerted to the role that women are to play in your book: here is a field production of a football game. We have the mechanical crane, the huge broadcast video camera, the two serious white men experts operating this serious equipment, and the not-so-serious subjects: five giggling mini-clad cheerleaders.

The color pages inserted in the opening chapter continue this perception of women: Color Plate 8 shows two scenes of a seductive woman lying on a field with a blouse half-off—to illustrate the fog filter. Opposite we get an Asian woman applying makeup, presumably getting ready to assume a seductive pose, perhaps on a different "production field."

Makeup is a recurring theme for women; on page 177 a woman's face is used to illustrate the caption that makeup is needed "to hide minor skin blemishes." And on page 219, we see who applies the makeup; a man takes charge of the blemish control of a bathing-suited blonde. Even in the area of makeup it is the white men who assume the active role.

It is the overall assumption of passivity that is the main problem with your illustrations. Uniformly, the white men are in control of the technology, setting up lights, looking through the cameras, handling the editing controls, operating decks, and directing the scenes. Women are shown in bed (page 301), blowing bubbles (page 203), in bathing suits (pages 103, 219), in total darkness (page 205), or, if lit, having a light reading taken (page 186) by an expert, serious man with equipment (a light meter). The message is clear: white men have the important equipment, and women (sometimes Asian women) get the costumes and toys.

Since over 70 percent of my production students are women, many of whom are women of color, who are expected to learn to actively and creatively use many kinds of field production equipment, I find the lessons your book teaches particularly problematic. This book is an affront to my women students, to myself and the many other women teachers who are actively participating in technical education, and to the thousands of women nationwide who are serious technical professionals.

In this regard, I speak for myself, not the University of California, San Diego, nor the Department of Communication, in which I teach. However, it is worth noting that almost half of the faculty members in my department are women, and this reflects the growing and active participation of women in the communication field. I hope that in the future, your textbooks will reflect this situation.

Sincerely,

*DeeDee Halleck*
Associate Professor
Department of Communication
University of California, San Diego

P.S. Since you do not request that I return the copy, even if I do not use it for my production courses, I hope you won't mind if I keep it and pass it around in another of my courses: Stereotyping: Racism and Sexism in the Media.



# Making Bloody Mary

*Betsy Newman*

In my own work in video—as well as the work I do for other adults—it seems that the twin demons of technocracy and marketplace have become my constant companions. I try to keep sight of the things that attracted me to video in the first place: its affordable, populist accessibility, and its power as a tool for personal and political revelation. Now, however, these seem like the lost, lovable qualities of a friend of my youth who's grown up to be a hard-nosed business-person. Maybe it had to happen, especially in New York City, where everything's pricey and the artists' community has been scattered to the five boroughs by the pressures exerted by the real estate interests.



And maybe it's not all bad. For an old hippie like me, dealing with the realities of funding and distribution can be an adventure. The hound of "broadcast quality" nipping at my heels has indeed made me run faster and harder. But I miss the days when content had more value than the signal and it seemed that video artists dealt in a truly alternative form. I fear that the more we attempt to conform to television standards, the greater risk we run of simply doing R&D for the big boys.

Of course we do have to make a living. It was in pursuit of that goal that I discovered places in New York where video is still in its salad days, where it's in the hands of the young and broke whose budgets are measured in time rather than dollars—the New York City public schools. I've been working as a video artist-in-the-schools for about five years. It's not all I do to scrape together the rent, but it has paid a lot of the bills (although no benefits). And it has provided a context where I can work without the pressures of the market and its lust for electronic purity.

These school gigs, or residencies, are part of a network of arts education programs which are designed to bring professional artists of all disciplines into the schools. In New York City, with nearly a million students in the public education system, the opportunities for artists who want to do this kind of work are extensive. Most of the programs are publicly funded on a year-to-year basis by, among others, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the city's Department of Cultural Affairs, and the New York Foundation for the Arts. Funding is usually regranted through arts organizations, including the Henry Street Settlement, the Children's Museum of Manhattan. and the Touchstone Center for Children, which also provide on-going moral and philosophical support. On the down side, in most cases job security is not part of the deal, nor is health insurance. The pay ranges from $100 to $150 a day, and a residency may require travel to any corner of the city, often a journey of up to an hour on the subway or buses.

Most of my jobs in the schools are for 10 to 15 days, once a week, working with three classes each day. My intention is to design a program for each class. I use the school's equipment, usually a VHS camcorder, tripod, television, and a cheap external mic. On the first day, I bring all the equipment with me to the classroom in order to capitalize immediately on the kids' ravenous appetite for TV. We spend the first few sessions learning camera moves and the video vocabulary, shooting short shots which the students design. I organize the kids into crews consisting of a technician, cameraperson, director, assistant director, and boom operator (using a mic taped to a broom handle), thus giving the maximum number of people a task. Initially I do a lot of the directing, but by the end of a residency the students can call most of the shots themselves.

In these early sessions we also watch and analyze tapes made by other classes, drawn from the large library that I have assembled. This process helps the kids—and their teacher, a vital collaborator—understand the possibilities and limitations of in-school production as well as what's expected of them.

At about the third week we decide what the tape we will make together will be about and how it is to be designed. For the next few sessions the students do the necessary reading, writing, and artwork, usually working in small groups. With younger children we often choose a popular subject, like ice cream or sneakers, which can be explored from numerous angles requiring some research. With older students choices are broader and often related to social and interpersonal issues.

The design phase is where I intervene the most, helping students shape their projects to look good on the "little box." Once we begin to shoot, by about the fifth or sixth week, I do as little as possible. The kids shoot, watch the tape, and often reshoot. In a large class this sometimes feels like trying to create order from chaos, and there's never enough time. But it's an exciting process—self-criticism, cooperation, visual thinking are all practiced in an atmosphere of urgent creativity. When the shooting is completed, I edit the tape, the only phase which, in most cases, kids in schools can't do themselves. The finished tape is shown at a screening, parents and other classes are invited, and the makers of the tape answer questions from the audience about how it was made. I am always moved by the assurance with which kids speak at these screenings and the delight with which they watch their videos. The means of production, securely in their hands, hold no mystery for them. Some of the power of thought and imagination, which television so seductively subverts, seems to have been restored.

This year I had a relatively long, 40-day residency, funded by the New York Foundation for the Arts, at a junior high school in East Harlem called the Creative Learning Community, one of the many alternative schools in that district, the legacy of Tony Alvarado's stint as district supervisor. This is as ideal a situation as any I have experienced working in video with kids. The school's alternative nature provides large blocks of time for nonacademic work, the student body is small, and the teachers and administration are supportive. With the luxury of extra time, self-examination and creativity have expanded. This was particularly evident in one project, *Bloody Mary: Mayhem in the Mirror*, in which the seventh grade undertook to

present the story of Henry the Eighth's eldest daughter. Junior high legend has it that Bloody Mary haunts the mirrors of school bathrooms and will appear if called in a certain way. In the students' minds, then, her story is probably closer to *Nightmare on Elm Street* than the history of England. Even so, in order to make the video the students were willing to do a lot of work, including historical research, bringing to it the richness of their imaginations and their surprisingly pluralistic view of the world.

One day in particular remains vivid. We were preparing to shoot the scene everyone was anticipating, the one in which Mary tortures the peasants. The week before we had made dismembered bodies out of papier maché, and now we were going to paint them. A couple of kids had found red and white paint and were mixing a pink skin color. The other kids watched, raising no objections. Their teacher Mindy Meyers and I watched, too, as these children, whose skins were all shades of brown and who would play the roles of peasants, just as they had played Mary, Henry, Catherine of Aragon, et al. in previous scenes, prepared to paint their surrogate limbs pink. Finally we intervened, pointing out what was to us the obvious discrepancy. For a moment the kids were nonplussed. Then someone said, "But Henry the Eighth was white."

I was stunned. Why had this never come up before? We had been shooting for several weeks with no mention of race or color. I plunged on. "But you're not white," I said, feeling out of my depth. "Don't you think these body parts should match the actors?" They looked around at each other, and at the pink paint. "We're all different colors," said one of the kids. "What color should we use?" We had everybody put their hands in a circle, study their varying tones, and then decide for themselves how to mix paint. What ensued was a frank and funny discussion of color and a trip to the art room for brown paint, which they mixed in several shades. As they painted, the kids continued to talk.

"Why do we have to do this white people's history anyway?" one student asked. "Why don't we learn about black people?" The immediate answer was that they had picked the Bloody Mary legend themselves, and, anyway, this history has some relevance to their lives. But that had become irrelevant. That they asked the question at all was what mattered to me. Something both personal and political had surfaced for these students and continued to inform our process of making the tape. The next week one of the boys brought in a poster of Malcolm X holding a gun, captioned, "By any means necessary." Our discussion went on, and the self-awareness we had stumbled upon continued to inform the process of making the tape.

The production of *Bloody Mary* afforded low-tech joys as well, like fogging the set with smoke bombs and creating a musical score during the shoot with a toy keyboard. The finished tape is rough, lively, funny, even educational. The production values are decidedly nonbroadcast, but nobody cares. It was challenging and a lot of fun to make. It's been shown all over the district, but—until the gatekeepers of broadcast and cable revise their ideas about quality—you'll never see it on television.

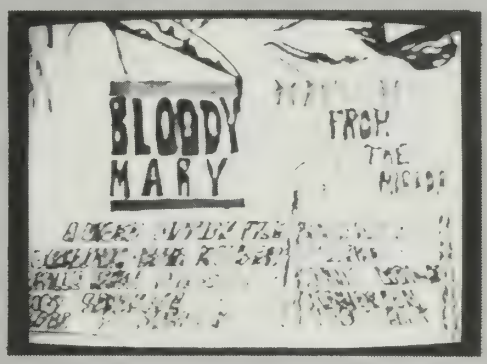
*Betsy Newman has worked in video since 1978. Her tapes include the award-winning* Debate of the Dead *and a work-in-progress on the abolitionists Sarah and Angelina Grimke.*

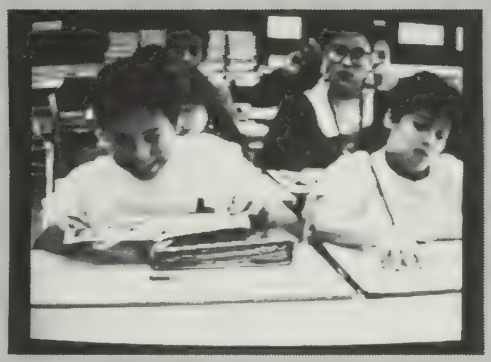
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# Bloody Mary—Mayhem in the Mirror

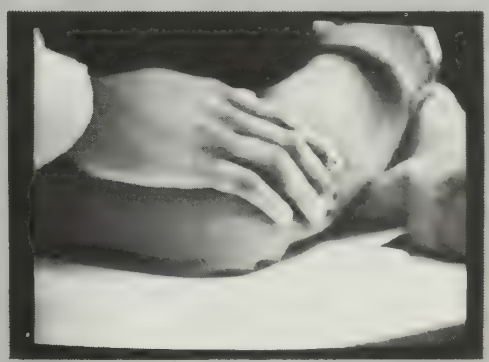
produced by Mindy Meyers' 7th grade Video Option class at the Creative Learning Community School, Bronx, New York

(8 minutes, color)



***Teacher.*** **Okay, class. Today we're going to learn about Henry the Eighth and Catherine of Aragon, so take out your notebooks. Adrian! This is class time, not comic book time.**



***Teacher.*** **Okay, does anyone know why Spain was angry at England? John! John! Wake up, John.**



*Henry and Catherine have a very serious discussion in the throne room. Henry*: Catherine, I want a male child to lead England in the right direction after I die. *Catherine*: How're we going to make sure we have a male child? *Henry*: Simple. We'll call the witch.



*Witch*: You called me? *Henry*: Yes. Would you give us a male child for $2000? *Witch*: No. *Catherine*: $3000? *Witch*: No. *Henry*: $4000? *Witch*: No. *Henry*: $5000? *Witch*: Yes. I'll get you what you want (hee hee). *Henry*: We're going to have a male child dear, so it can take after me.



*Nine months later. Henry*: You didn't give me a male child. *Witch*: Not my fault. *Catherine*: This is a girl, not a boy. *Henry*: Off with her head! *Witch*: You can't kill me. I'm the witch! *Henry*: I'm not going to give you any money. *Witch*: No money? No money! Then, curse on the child!



*Peasant*: But it was your father who turned us into Protestants. *Mary*: You will do as I say, or else! Guards!



*Peasant*: Blood! My family!



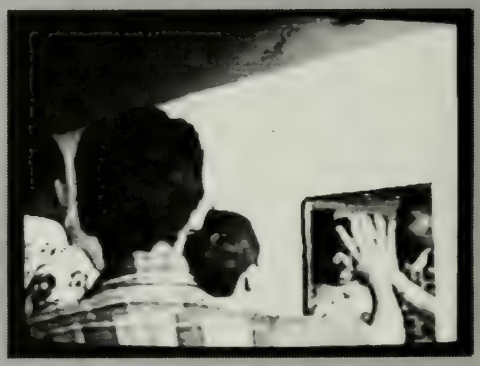
*Boy, tortured, screaming.*



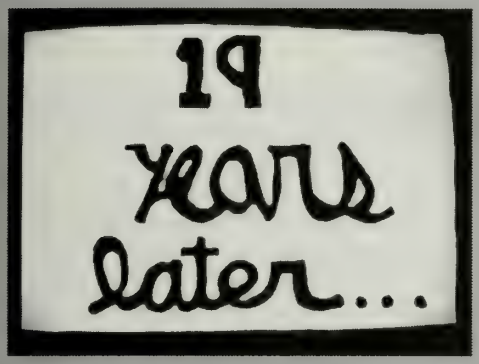
*Good witch*: Queen of England, you are an evil woman. You have persecuted the peasants long enough. It now must come to an end. *Mary*: You don't scare me. *Good witch*: I challenge you to a duel. *Mary*: All right. But the winner must punish the loser eternally. *Good witch*: Agreed.



*VO: Mary, your punishment is to be trapped in a mirror for eternity. Mary*: Help! Help!



*Boy in bathroom*: You ever hear about that superstition where you turn around seven times and say "Bloody Mary" four times, she might come out? I dare you to try it.






*Mary, cursed by the witch, mistakes a fly for a Protestant—and eats it.*



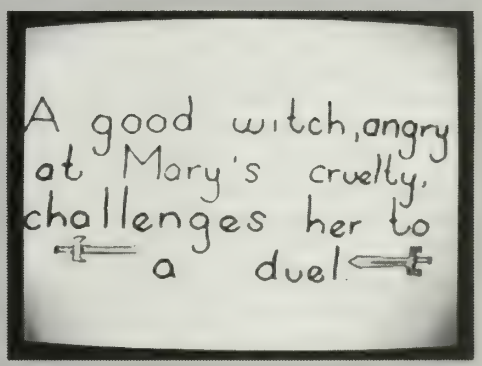
*Mary was coronated in 1553. She planned to return England to the Catholic Church.*
*Mary*: People of this village. I, Queen Mary the First, have come to inform you that I want you to become Catholics.



*Head flies off.*



*Queen Mary feels no remorse.*






*Boys*: Bloody Mary! Bloody Mary!



*John, stopped by a hand when walking down the hall*: Oh, it's only you (*to teacher*).



*Teacher*: Remember, John, get plenty of sleep and do your homework.

# The Power in Their Hands

*Laura Nuchow Vural*

"Making poetry videos isn't about making the *Toxic Avenger*. It's about finding your insides, your essence. Then you have to get the courage to show people what you're all about on the TV screen," says ninth-grader Efren Manzanet from Manhattan's Park West High School. "The camera is my eye, an eye I never knew I had before. The camera is my mouth, my heart. And when I edit and use the computer to freeze a frame or digitize or colorize, I feel I can do anything. I feel I have power."



For almost four years, our New York-based Rise and Shine Productions has been putting VHS camcorders in the hands of thousands of junior high and high school students. We've brought our Poetry Video Learning Project and Video Integration Program into schools to train staffs to use video to help build students' language skills, criticial thinking skills, creativity, and sense of responsibility. Funded primarily with Board of Education Dropout Prevention funds, we help teachers develop ways to integrate video into their curricula.

In 1986 I formed Rise and Shine with film/video artist Larry Buskey, educator Robert Singer, and CBS newswriter Betti Weimersheimer. Previously Larry and I had worked with a poetry performance organization, Out There Productions, which wanted to develop poetry videotapes as an avant-garde art form. It seemed to me, however, that by employing similar methods, we could use video to turn students on to poetry. We showed the poetry videotapes to Robert, who was a high school English teacher, and he introduced us to the Dropout Prevention Program. Together we formed the Poetry Video Learning Project, which proved highly successful. That success, in turn, motivated us to form a nonprofit educational media organization. Presently, Rise and Shine has a multi-national staff of nine. In addition to 28 schools in New York City, Rise and Shine has recently begun to work with school systems across the country.

In 1986 we had no equipment, no space, no budget. We produced our first crop of tapes using the facilities of the Center for Media Arts and the Educational Video Center in Manhattan. Barely surviving the Board of Education bureaucracy, we eventually were paid for our services and also received funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and several private foundations. We were then able to move into our modest Times Square studio. Rise and Shine now has three VHS and two video 8 camcorders, one three-quarter-inch M2 camera, two industrial VHS editing systems, a special effects colorizer, an image scanner, and an Amiga 2000 computer.

Initially, when I first introduce the video program to a class, many students doubt our motives and their own ability to create a video, work that hard, trust their classmates, and produce something of value. Their expectations are also very high, since they are used to the slickly-produced mass media. But in time student leadership emerges and the young creative minds go to work. Once students opt to make a videotape, they can no longer "front." They want what they show on the screen to be the truth. And they point the camera at things many of us don't want to see.

We find the Poetry Video Learning Project an effective way to initiate students in video production. We bring professional performance poets like Barbara Barg, Kurt Lamkin, Pedro Pietri, and Nancy Mercado into an English class to help students explore their inner voice. These poets assume the difficult task of encouraging students who usually avoid writing, especially about their own perceptions. These poets work with our *Poetry Video Learning Project Workbook*, which offers fundamental writing exercises. At Park West High School last fall, for instance, Lamkin worked with the three classes in the school's dropout prevention program. In one class, the students wrote poems about their hands:

When it is a rainy day for you,
your hand sweeps the tears.
And when anger rages in your heart and eyes,
your hand unites in a fist.
And when you're confused and alone,
your hand swings openly, brushing against your pants.

—Ali Muhammed

After the students wrote their poems, Lamkin coached the students to perform for the class. At first shy and uncomfortable, the young poets soon recited their words with pride. Then video artist Cyrille Phipps joined the class with two VHS camcorders. As half of the class recited their poetry, the other half learned basic camera operation techniques and videotaped the performances. The class reviewed the tapes, critiquing their own performances and camerawork. Then it became time for the students to visualize their poetry and write a video treatment.

As the student poets read their poems, we tell their classmates to close their eyes and picture the images that occur to them. Most of the students gravitate towards literal imagery, but we remind them about metaphors and

**Opposite page: Students in an English-as-a-Second-Language class at Martin Luther King Jr. High School learning to operate a video camera.**

**Right: Students at Martin Luther King Jr. High School in Manhattan—left to right: Juan Carlos Colon, Sidney McNeill, and Sheldon Thompson—edit a tape made by their after school video club, using equipment at the school.**



encourage the class to conjure images that might complement the tone, texture, color, or mood of the poem. We also suggest they explore contrasting images, such as the time when a student wrote about his ideal bathroom of gold tile and silver faucets, and his script depicted the graffitied bleak walls of the school's boys bathroom.

Influenced by Spielberg movies and *Rambo*, soap operas and sitcoms, student have to fight those formulaic tendencies. While writing their treatments, they're reminded of our low or nonexistent budget as well as logistical and time constraints. So when the students began to collaborate on the visual treatment for the hand poems, they decided to create scenes that would zoom in on their hands and keep a drum beat playing to tie the various poems together. The treatment written for Ali's poem above is simply, "Close up of Ali's face leaning on his hand. Ali lifts his head slightly and clenches his fist. After he says his poem he leans back on his hand and stares into the camera."

After the students complete their treatment, the video artist works with the students to format the script. They list the cast, props, costumes, and all other production needs. Schools vary in their cooperation, but all the preproduction usually happens during regular 40-minute class periods. The students form a production company and learn about the responsibilities of the producer, director, floor manager, art director, sound and lighting technicians, and so on. Once the students give their company a name and assign jobs, the class truly transforms.

"Even when Kurt was trying to get us to write poetry, I didn't get into it," says Cathy Barretto, the class assistant producer of *The Power in Our Hands*. "I liked him okay because he seemed to really care, but I still cut class. But once we started getting the script ready and listing the props, and I had a responsibility to help the producer make sure everybody was doing their jobs, then I started to get excited. I was the one who had to bring in the mirror and the flowers for the video. And it came out really great. Now I know I want to have a career in video."

When we schedule the actual production, we usually can arrange for students to be excused from a couple of their other classes, so we have a block of time to shoot. MCM Productions, the name of this class' company, was able to get two extra periods. There were 15 scenes in the script, and we had a little over two hours to complete the video. We decided to do the voice-overs during a regular class period another day, so we could concentrate on the visuals. Phipps worked with class director Sean Russell to create a storyboard, but in these class productions you have to allow for spontaneity.

There were many debates in setting up the shots during the two hours. The most interesting was about a scene that called for a white hand and black hand to try to meet and shake but are obstructed by other hands. When Sean directed the scene, he decided that the hands should just meet and shake as the camera zooms into an extreme close-up. The kids argued a bit, but since it was Sean's poem they were producing, they did the scene his way. The results are a strong statement about racial unity—two hands bonding without interference, a close-up emphasizing the poems words, "...everyone follows this hand for it has a sense of persuasiveness."

After the shoot was completed and the students had recorded their poems, Sean, Cathy, Ali, and two other students from other classes came to Rise and Shine's studio to edit their work. Efren Manzanet and Larry Webster had worked with Phipps to edit their respective videos, and they came almost every day after school to work on postproduction.

We had just purchased Invision software for our Amiga computer. None of our staff had yet had a chance to learn the program fully, but we showed the students what the possibilities were, and they went to town. Under Phipp's watchful eye, the enthusiastic student artists superimposed, digitized, and colorized each scene. When the editing was complete, the students mixed the voiceovers and original drum music composed by a professional musician, Richard Younger, in consultation with the student producers. MCM Productions wanted a steady African beat with an Oriental flair, and that's what they got.

The presentation of this tape and two other poetry videos at Park West High School was a huge success. The school rented a video projector, and the students, who were once skeptical, saw their faces on an eight-foot screen. After the applause and awards for creative achievement, many students congregated to plan their next tape. They formed an after-school club called High Fidelity Productions and are presently in postproduction on a spoof of TV and films. In their classes, we continue with the video integration program, working with the social studies teacher producing a news show, with the science teacher on nutritional videos, and with the English teacher in creating original dramatic programs.

Next fall, Rise and Shine plans to institute a Video Technology Career School, with the cooperation of Park West principal Richard Ross. This summer, Cathy, Larry, Efren, and Ali will join 10 students from other Rise and Shine programs to work as Video Rangers, videotaping in Central Park for the Parks Council and Earth Environmental Group. Paid by the city's Summer Youth Employment Program, these young video artists are on their way to building careers. "This is the first thing I've ever stuck with my whole life. I don't know if they're going to want to see what this black kid from Harlem is going to do with video, but they sure as hell are going to have to keep their eyes open. I mean to make them watch," Larry Webster smiles, as he presses the perform button on the editing machine.

*Laura Nuchow Vural is the cofounder and executive producer of Rise and Shine Productions.*

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# The Power in Our Hands

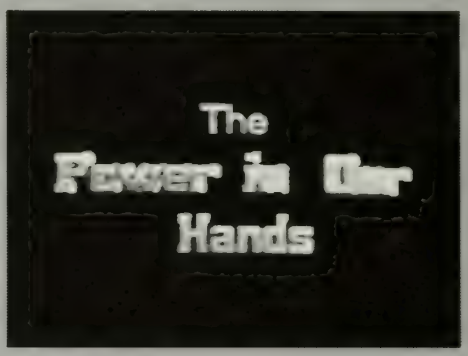
produced by Mr. Miraglia's English class at Park West High School, New York, New York
(5 minutes, 30 seconds, color)



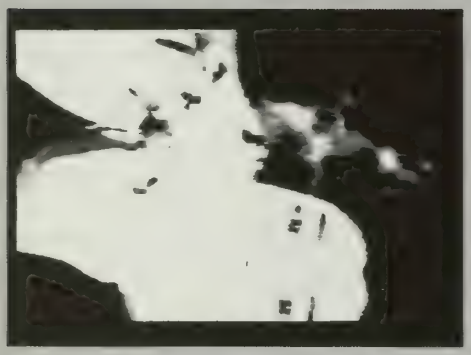

*Drums play.*



*Drums play.*




*Drums play.*



And when a rose changes colors, it is worn and sort of rough, like my hand.



*Drums play.*



The brain of knowledge has a hand in creating peace instead of human destruction.



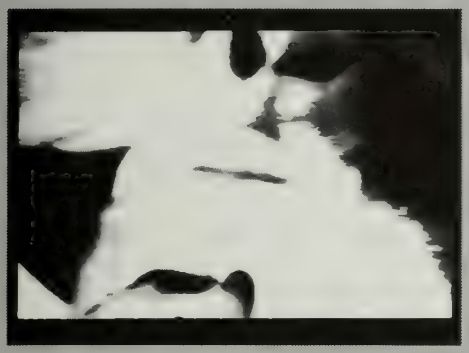
My hand has deep dark lines with callouses under two fingers. I figure my hand to be a body builder.



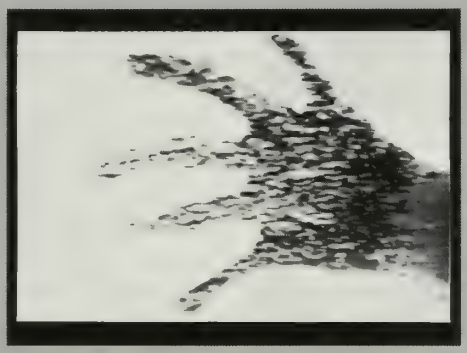
Our hands are smooth as silk turning into different shapes, sometimes into beautiful colors like a fiery red or a pale and lonely pink.



The hand of beauty is as soft as cotton and white as a baby crying for his bottle.



When it is a rainy day for you, your hand sweeps the tears.



The darkened shadow of a sly fox's paw is so tense and ready to flow, full of anger and fear.



The love of hands are blossomed roses red as wine, dancing around an open fire.



Everyone follows this hand for it has a sense of persuasiveness.



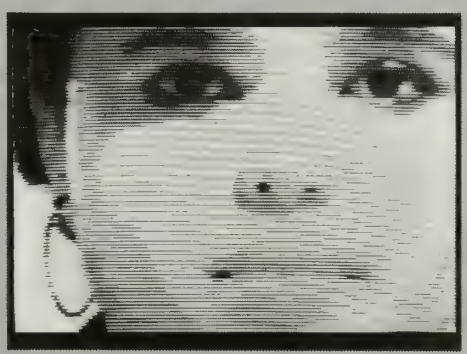
The white cougar is double-jointed. The palm is pinkish-white. Her lines are deep.



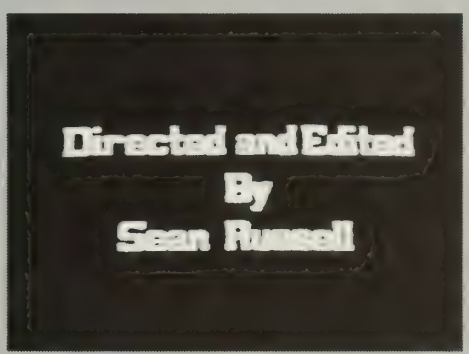
She does so much. Her hands get so sweaty. She works until she can work no more.



*Drums play, and the lines reveal a digitized girl holding a bouquet of flowers.*



*Drums play.*




*Drums play.*

# Cultivating the Craft of Cinema

## Art and Politics Meet at la Escuela Internacional de Cine y Television

*Ray Navarro*

Still attracting a shower of praise from *cine-teleastes* around the world, the Escuela Internacional de Cine y Television (International School of Film and Television) will soon embark upon its third year of existence. La Escuela, as the name is popularly abbreviated, has an illustrious prehistory. Founded in response to a mandate by none other than Fidel Castro and with an international faculty that has included Julio García Espinosa, Gabriel García Marquez, Ana María García, and Miguel Littín, to name only a few, la Escuela struggles to maintain utopian ambitions rivaled by few previous models for cultural education, with the possible exception of the Bauhaus. But la Escuela's logo, complete with geometric figures—a circle, square, and triangle—in primary colors, is perhaps where that comparison ends.



The broadest goal of la Escuela is to influence the future of culture in what literature about the school calls the "three worlds": Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Situated in San Antonio de los Baños, a half hour drive from Havana, the school provides students with a curriculum emphasizing anti-imperialism but also what they call "internationalist professionalism." Indeed, Fernando Birri, the distinguished Argentinian filmmaker and the school's founding director, in his inaugural speech three years ago stated, "This school is constructed with pre-fabricated blocks of cement, but not with pre-fabricated ideas.... I cannot find a better terminology to describe ourselves...than militants of the imagination."

La Escuela accepts only students from the "three worlds," with one notable exception. American Latinas and Latinos can apply, but first they must undergo a rigorous examination that poses questions about artistic motivation, cultural heritage, and Spanish language competency. Then they are interviewed by the school's appointed representatives, who, in the past, have included Eduardo Diaz of San Antonio and Jesus Treviño from Los Angeles. Finally, after a waiting period of about six months, between two and four lucky North American Latinos may be selected to study film and television at la Escuela.

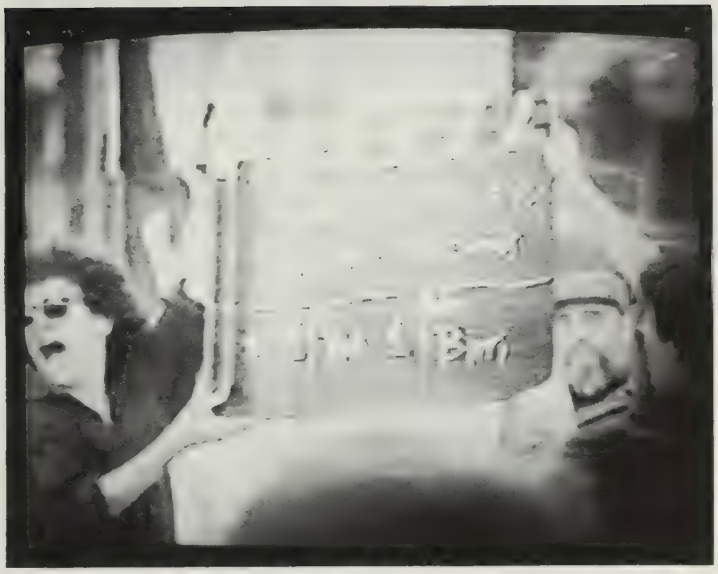
In total, la Escuela accepts four students from each country within the three worlds, the average age of the students is 25; 50 percent are women, 50 percent men. Each student is first required to complete a six-month Basic Course, which is an introduction to film/video terminology and technology, including production of a three-minute documentary film. The first full year of the program entails study of all aspects of narrative film production. In the second year students concentrate on television studio work. The curriculum of the third and final year consists of a professional residency at ICAIC, the Cuban Film Institute, or ICRT, the Cuban Institute of Radio and Television. The course descriptions of the school's offerings list such titles as Marquez' class on narrative, How to Tell Stories, as well as Panorama of Latin American, Caribbean, African and Asian Culture (Cultural Integration) and Universal History and Critique of Cinema and Television. There are also smaller experimental workshops on topics like Counterpenetration of Markets and The Enlightened Projectionist. These Dialogues of Advanced Study are designed to be small seminars at a graduate or postgraduate level.

Two Chicanos from the southwestern U.S. who have attended la Escuela are Graciela Sanchez and Enrique Berumen. Their different experiences reflect the changes in the school during its short history. Sanchez, a Texas-born Chicana activist, was one of 82 students accepted into the school when first attempts were made to implement the Basic Course. Their student population eventually dropped to around 60, for reasons both personal and political. According to Sanchez, "Some students were dissatisfied by the school itself. For others the culture shock of living and studying in revolutionary Cuba was too much." Sanchez' course load was designed around the ambitious and expensive prospect that each student would produce a short documentary film. "This is obviously proof that Cuban society is in fact willing to accept criticism. Why else would they require students to make documentaries, which by definition deal with social issues?" Sanchez observed.

Her ambitious documentary videotape *Not Because Fidel Castro Says So* was produced after she completed the introductory six-month course at the school. The tape takes on the often over-simplified issue of homosexuality in Cuba, explored through a series of "people-in-the-street" interviews with Cuban workers as well as longer statements by lesbian and gay Cubans. Several speakers express conventional conservative attitudes that condemn homosexuality as "unnatural." Discussing the repercussions of such attitudes, one lesbian comments, "Yes, we are repressed, but not because Fidel Castro says so...." In fact, the tape hints at the rise of a gay liberation struggle brewing in Cuba. Sanchez' tape was screened at the American Film Institute's National Video Festival, the Global Village Documentary Fes-

**Opposite page: The workers who readied the buildings of the Escuela Internacional de Cine y Television for its inauguration in December 1986 were seated in the front rows of the audience invited to the school's opening ceremony. Their enthusiastic reception of speakers at the event were recorded on video by students-to-be at la Escuela.**

**Right: An inaugural speech by Fernando Birri, Argentinian filmmaker and the school's founding director, was also recorded by students, while Fidel Castro observes their activities from the platform.**



tival, and the Los Angeles Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, standing as a prime example of the school's goal to produce film- and videomakers who can compete effectively in the industry at the level of distribution as well as production.

Enrique Berumen, a Los Angeles-based writer raised in Mexico City, experienced the growing pains of the school first-hand. As a student during la Escuela's second year he was denied the option of producing his own 16mm film, due largely to economic constraints. "We were divided into production crews of five or six, working in video because it was cheaper." This caused resentment among some of the students, who were upset because they had been promised an education in *film* production. For Berumen, the school's prescription for collaboration didn't work either, since "students forced to work together didn't get along." Eventually he and his collaborators split into groups of two and made a piece about a production crew working on a tape that everyone hates. The tape ends happily when the group premieres the tape and everyone loves it.

Berumen stresses that his own decision not to complete the entire program of study was aggravated by the precarious economic and political situation in which the school finds itself. "One reason that we didn't get to do our independent film projects was that our equipment (donated by Japan and Spain) was held up by the economic blockade and by the threat of U.S. invasion of Panama." Despite such hostilities, the school is not overtly opposed to U.S. films. Enrique observes that "Hollywood movies are very popular among the students, and one of the professors even showed *The Graduate*, *Bonnie and Clyde*, even *The Great Train Robbery*. In fact, I saw more American films there than I ever did in the States." He adds, "Basically they are against dumb movies such as *Rambo* and *The Three Amigos*."

Both Berumen and Sanchez emphasize the overall merits of la Escuela. As Chicanos they feel that studying with students and teachers there influenced them greatly. Both recount fond memories of the progress of fellow students from Ecuador and Bolivia who, when they arrived, had never held an audiotape recorder, much less a video camera. Both also report ideological conflicts between conservative, upper-class Argentinian and Mexican students and more radical Salvadorean and Nicaraguan students who had spent most of their adolescence in the trenches. These conflicts played themselves out against a backdrop of defending the school and Cuban society from its critics. The workers who run the school apparently take personal offense when foreign students criticize Cuba in their tapes and films. Officially, however, la Escuela has no ties to the Cuban Ministry of Culture and is owned and administered by the Fundacíon del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano, which is based in Mexico City. Sanchez stresses, "It is not a *Cuban* film school, but an *international* film school. There is an all out effort...to help the school survive. You can see it in the cooks, the cleaners, the doctors of the school who take care of the students." Members of Berumen's class eventually organized a work brigade of 30 students who went to Nicaragua for the summer. But he emphasizes, "You don't have to be a Marxist to go to the school."

Perhaps the future of la Escuela Internacional de Cine y Television will be determined by how it realizes the ambitions of its founders: to educate film- and videomakers who will take their skills back to their countries of origin and work in the industry there. Sanchez left the school in order to continue her community activism, while Berumen plans to continue his filmmaking education, studying screenwriting at the University of Southern California. Currently he works as a fourth- and fifth-grade teacher in East Los Angeles. As an elementary school teacher in a district with high dropout rates and low literacy, Berumen encounters his own barriers in teaching youngsters how to fight for their right to read and write. Asked if his was a Jaime Escalante experience, this former student of la Escuela replies, "That's a myth. *Stand and Deliver* was a very Hollywood movie."

*Ray Navarro is a videomaker and writer who lives in New York City.*

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# Social Studies

## Public Policy and Media Literacy

*Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard*

Practicing democracy requires critical thinking. Almost everyone agrees that the ability to read and write should be a fundamental human right, extended to everyone. We understand that a person who cannot read is in thrall to those who can. You cannot enter the developed world as a full human subject unless you can break and master the code of the word. Today, literacy doesn't stop with words and numbers. To enter our social discourse as a full participant one must also break the thrall of the magic box and master its secrets. If we fail to adopt media literacy as an essential goal of public cultural policy, we doom ourselves to enter history as its objects, not its makers. This essay explores the question of public policy for media literacy. But it has to start by retrieving public cultural policy from the Reagan-Bush deep freeze and scraping away the frost of cynicism that's attached itself to the very idea of the public sector acting for the public good.

Over the last eight years, with the federal government taking the lead, public issues have been pushed almost entirely out of the picture. We have been encouraged to view all our troubles as personal, even self-created, and to seek only private solutions to them. For instance, in an independent media field marked by the scarcity of material support, public policy has been to make it harder to get grants. This has assured that independents will be obsessed with the problems of survival. Ten thousand times more energy and attention has gone into writing grant proposals than into proposals to improve or replace the support system—of which grants are, after all, only one possible mechanism.

C. Wright Mills drew a distinction that's useful here, between the "personal troubles of milieu" and the "public issues of social structure." The first category refers to problems falling within the range of an individual's character and relationships: Will I be able to get this grant? Is my proposal well written? Do I know the right people? How can I make this film without making a shambles of my private life? Mills' second category, "public issues," transcends the private and individual. How can we ensure a diversity of voices and visions in the media? How can we realize the media's educating and liberating potential? These public issues call into question the structure of social institutions and the values on which their present organization is based. It's true that every public issue has its correlate in the personal—the issue of decent housing, in the suffering of the homeless person; the issue of providing medical care, in the problems of the person with AIDS. But when these public issues are treated as if they were entirely matters for private concern, we have victim-bashing on a grand scale.

Our national cultural policy should mandate and foster media literacy. Some readers of *The Independent* will be concerned with this issue primarily for its impact on their immediate situations—the possibility that getting government more involved will mean more money, jobs, or attention for their work. Although we think the policy initiatives proposed below would help cure the personal troubles of hard-pressed independents, we believe their main benefit would be in bringing the rest of the population into a more constructive, democratic, and satisfying relationship with the media.

The global proliferation of electronic mass media has excited deep feeling and passionate debate. Most alarming to policy-makers around the world has been the passivity the mass media seem to breed, displacing and undermining social life, community activities, and other creative pursuits. Our postwar national culture is typically singled out in this regard: they call it "Americanization"; we call it being couch potatoes. As a society, we need to foster a more dynamic relationship between the citizenry and media, one that does not stop when the program ends and the TV set is turned off. For those who aspire to democracy in public life, our greatest challenge is transforming the media from threats to democracy into tools for democratic change.

Achieving this will require starting from square one. People without some special interest in the field find it hard to grapple with media as a public issue. This is not surprising, since one of the things our mass media do best is pound home the inevitability of their current organization, ideally suited to their role as the pep squad for our consumer society. Their self-ratifying quality makes it hard even to imagine that the media can be changed through human intervention.

Yet it is precisely this imagination which is needed to drive public policy, though you'd never know it from our current policy. The massive, interlocking complex of business interests which make up the dominant media have been allowed to develop pretty much as they wish, pursuing commercial success. Meanwhile, the essential public issue—the media's role as our primary public forum, their tendency to erode democratic life—has been pushed further and further into the background.

The essential public role that remains to be filled in this country is to counter the imbalances that result from the domination of a country's cultural industries by commercial interests. We cannot expect the commercial arena to eliminate the need for the types of positive social interventions which should be the essence of public policy: nurturing diversity, stimulating and supporting creativity, and encouraging active participation and interaction in community and political life.

In setting out a selection of practical proposals for a new public policy, we've tried to strike a balance between the practical and the ideal, without retreating to the lowest common denominator (i.e., what the Bush administration is likely to favor). Improving existing programs is important, but if we allow our thinking about public policy to be constrained by the current arrangements, we'll never be free of them.

The first step to putting any policy proposals for media literacy into practice will be to raise the topic as a broad public issue, to mobilize a constituency for change. Independent producers by themselves—even independents and their allies in distribution, funding, and service organizations—don't constitute a large enough constituency to alter public policy in lasting and fundamental ways. In the current Washington scenario, independents are and will remain a special interest group, vociferous, committed, energetic though it may be. The kind of change we discuss in this article will only come from shifting the media from the special interest arena onto the common ground of nonspecialist debate.

There's no point minimizing the effort this will require, though it's encouraging to remember that it's been done in the past in other fields. Social security was a fringe idea before it became law. The environmental impact report was a notion which went from way out in left field to squarely into the mainstream in record time. Any effort to bring about this sort of transformation starts by getting ideas out into the public arena, where they can be examined, debated, and refined. We hope that our proposals will stimulate others to contribute their own ideas and broaden the debate.

Media literacy is a catchy phrase, its precise meaning open to argument. We use it here in a very generous sense. Complete media literacy means mastery of the electronic media: knowledge of how films, tapes, records are

produced, with enough hands-on experience at the lower end of the technological scale to make entering more complex production an option later on; knowledge of the social, economic, and political characteristics of the media as they're currently organized, including a sense of how they developed; and knowledge of the debates over the media's effects, psychological, physiological, and social, as they've been perceived by diverse interests and competing schools of thought.

These three dimensions of media literacy can describe the education of a third-grader or a Ph.D. candidate. An eight-year-old can hold a camera, understand how *Who Killed Roger Rabbit?* was produced and sold, and enter into a discussion about how it feels to watch a lot of TV. The graduate student can pursue the same lines of inquiry, taken to a higher power.

Stormy debates rage over the kind and amount of the media's effects on the individual and on society. It would be easy to let the problem of media education collapse beneath the weight of these controversies. Unable to decide whether to teach that TV is a mechanical device that destroys brain cells and deadens our spirits or that TV is our portal to a communications network embodying human potential to expand minds and lift spirits—we don't teach anything at all. The obvious solution, suggested by educators in other contexts, is to teach the controversies: describe the poles of opinion, investigate, analyze, locate the reasons to care, and, in doing so, vivify a public issue that badly needs a little life.

As part of public education policy, then, a mandate for universal media literacy ought to include at least the following commitments: every public school should be equipped with closed-circuit audio and video systems and studio facilities, as well as sufficient numbers of recorders, cameras, and other necessary tools to give every child adequate hands-on experience. Every public school should involve students in producing the audio-visual equivalents of school newspapers, yearbooks, and literary magazines, to supplement (but not supplant) these print publications. The curriculum from grade school through high school should acquaint every student with how the media are organized, how they've developed, and what policy measures have been considered and enacted to guide and regulate this public trust. There is no consensus story to be told here, but rather a complex tale of competing interests, debates, and dispositions in a fluid environment constantly being altered by changing technologies, markets, and public interests. It would be foolish to imagine that a "correct" line or position can be identified and taught. To the contrary, the goal of media education should be to make it clear that the media still constitute an open question, to enliven the debate and encourage future generations to enter it with vigor and imagination.

If media education stops at the schoolhouse door, however, it will be very difficult to bring about universal media literacy. Continuing education policy must encourage the deployment of media resources in many community settings. For instance, where they've existed, community cultural centers have historically played a significant role in making the means of artistic production available—art classes, painting and ceramics studios, drama groups. Many of the oldest such centers in this country were established during Federal One, the arts project of the Roosevelt administration's New Deal, which incorporated the Federal Theater Project, Federal Writers Project, and similar publicly-supported programs in all the arts. The New Deal arts programs were based on an understanding which seems to have slipped the minds of our current cultural policy-makers: there is a role for the public interest in correcting the imbalances of marketplace culture.

In many ways, conditions today parallel those of the 1930s. Unemployment and homelessness in this country are scandals. Our physical infrastructure is crumbling, and, though less apparent, so is our cultural infrastructure. Community arts groups across the country were put out of business when Reagan cut Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) public service program as one of his first acts in office. But now there's been almost a decade to begin to recoup, this time with the emphasis on surviving in spite of government policies. There are a few inklings that members of Congress are emerging from the long deregulatory snooze of the Reagan era. In 1988, for instance, Congress voted to reinstate the Fairness Doctrine as a policy of the Federal Communications Commission; it also passed laws regulating commercial time and standards for children's TV. Both policies fell to Reagan's axe, but Bush may not be so successful in overturning similar legislation.

The moment seems right for independents to join with other constituencies: artists of all kinds, employment advocates, people concerned about cultural equity in their own communities, to launch a campaign for a new Federal One. A major national initiative like this could ensure that community cultural centers are situated in every community, staffed with media professionals, and brought into the electronic age with public access facilities linked to cable and broadcast outlets.

We're not suggesting that a steady diet of amateur TV and radio should overtake broadcasts of professional productions. But there must be places within the higher-end media for citizens to tell their own stories in their own ways, without appropriation by the dream machine, without compulsory translation through the omniscient, omnipresent official voice. There are small examples all over the world which hold this kind of promise. Consider the Community Television Station (CTS) incorporated 12 years ago as part of the construction of the Chiba Garden Town housing complex about an hour from Tokyo. Because of high-rise interference, a complete cable system was built into the complex. The CTS studio includes VHS cameras and editing equipment available to residents of all ages, who learn by doing. Children as young as eight are involved in producing a weekly magazine-style show which is transmitted to every television in the complex. CTS' main show is broadcast several times each week and has a higher rating than anything offered on the main networks. The very interesting discussions on democratization of communication in *One World, Many Voices* (the report of UNESCO's MacBride Commission on a "new world information order") list dozens of other experiments: a chain of film workshops in France for people who wish to make short films on neighborhood issues; a TV station in the Federal Republic of Germany, which helps community groups make films about their work to be broadcast and inspire similar groups to form elsewhere; Yugoslavian information centers which produce media on local events and self-management issues, some broadcast nationally; and so on. None of these examples is perfect—they are plagued by ham-handed government intervention, self-censorship, underfunding, and other handicaps of all kinds. But this doesn't cancel the fact that model structures for multi-directional communication exist and could be perfected.

Needless to say, projects like these don't spring out of the ether. They are not commercially viable—they will not turn a buck—and must be supported by public or quasi-public authorities with an interest in democratic communications. In turn, that democratic interest must be rooted in public demand. The forces of status quo inertia are too strong to be overcome by anything less than urgent pressure to open democratic dialogue through the media. We have a long way to go before this is the case in the United States. At the federal level, for instance, the public is offered very little opportunity

to affect communications policy. Those with a passionate interest and commitment can launch letter-writing campaigns to affect broadcasters' programming choices, or petition to deny the licenses of particularly egregious broadcasters. Effective campaigns have been mounted to pass new communications legislation (for instance, limiting commercial time). But the issues go much deeper, to the heart of communications policy, to the very definition of the public interest: What do we, as a democratic society, want these essential parts of our cultural commonwealth to stand for and achieve?

We should be working toward communications policies that mandate minimum requirements for locally-originated and independent programming for all broadcast and cable outlets. To extend popular media literacy and bring the United States into the international dialogue, a quotient of foreign film exhibition and programming also should be mandated, including programming originating in languages other than English. The most promising direction would be to offer incentives to producers, distributors, and exhibitors of certain kinds of media. For instance, the German Film Advancement Institute taxes commercial film screenings to subsidize native German films (including part of the cost of overseas advertising). But another alternative, which could also be effective in the U.S., is to incorporate appropriate requirements into public policy as Canada has done in requiring broadcasters to carry a certain percentage of Canadian-originated program material in their broadcast schedules. Since most of the media we see within the U.S. already originates here, we'd have to create a workable definition of "independent media content" to substitute for "Canadian content," but it could be done. If exhibitors and programmers were required or rewarded for using independent films and tapes, the market will grow and the necessary distribution systems expand. Thus a policy initiative taken in the interest of creating a more dynamic relationship between the media and its publics would also have salutary effects on the incomes of those in the independent media sector.

Broadcast and public exhibition aren't everything, of course. In a media-literate society, small groups and individuals should be able to use audio-visual media precisely as they now use two-dimensional media. They would be used to create expressive works intended for an audience of aficionados. They'd be deployed as a matter of course to tell the story of an organization or cause or movement, just as one might publish a pamphlet or brochure. Multi-media newsletters could evolve to help keep a group's diffuse membership in touch with each other. Electronic media could be used to paint a family portrait or to communicate with the folks back home.

Cultural policy is a web of ideas and initiatives, all interconnected. When you tug on any single strand—media literacy, support for independents, broadcast regulations—you inevitably find the others trailing along. A new public policy for media literacy, by expanding and diversifying uses of the media, would also expand opportunities for independents to teach, work as community artists, staff all kinds of organizations, and mount independent projects. Putting a new universal media literacy policy in place would require a whole array of related initiatives. For instance, public service employment for media artists would be essential, as part of a "new Federal One" as described earlier. Fifteen years ago, when the San Francisco Arts Commission advertised the availability of 75 CETA public service employment jobs for artists, 3,000 people—a good number of them media artists—showed up to apply. A long list of films and tapes were made during the several years that CETA pumped an estimated $200-million into community cultural work. Unemployment and underemployment among independents is even higher today than it was in 1975, and the increasing penetration and sophistication of media means that demand for community media—if money could be found to subsidize the necessary jobs—would be even higher today.

Equipment access and product exchange programs also have their parallel in the New Deal, when the Federal Theater Project maintained a national script service, cataloguing, reproducing, and disseminating scripts used by the Living Newspaper and other theater groups within the WPA. Today, with public support, banks of equipment and tapes could be shared through networks of local, state, and regional libraries. Publicly maintained production and postproduction services (building on the kind of thing now being done on a shoestring by the Media Alliance in New York State and media centers across the country) should insure access for noncommercial projects.

The raw material for a free, open media forum is certainly available to us. If Hollywood is a rich, fat land, then the independent media sector is an underdeveloped country, lacking infrastructure and capital but well-equipped with human resources. Just as programs of economic development are prescribed for nations needing to build infrastructure and prosperity, we need a publicly-driven program of cultural development to bring our population into the media age as masters of media, not couch potatoes mastered by the media.

Our proposals posit a public role in media education as significant and powerful as the private sector's. In this country, the debate is really just beginning. We can and should argue about the best way to proceed. But the essential principles seem to us to be self-evident: the media will not be made more democratic by exempting them from the claims of democracy, and without a massive effort to bring about media literacy, our ability to practice democracy will remain critically impaired.

*Don Adams and Arlene Goldbard are partners in Adams & Goldbard, organizational and cultural development consultants based in Ukiah, California. They work with media clients across the U.S. and in their spare time write and speak on issues of cultural policy.*

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# CANADIAN COUNTERCURRENTS: THE IMAGES '89 FESTIVAL



**Production still from *Qaggig* (*Gathering Place*), one of the highlights of Toronto's Images festival. This video by Inuit producer Zacharias Kunuk is set in the 1930s and enacted by members of the Igloolik community.**

Photo: Zach Kanuk

Helen Lee

Like so many good ideas, Toronto's Images festival began as idle talk. Two years ago, when Toronto filmmaker Annette Mangaard and writer/bookstore owner Marc Glassman bumped into each other on a public streetcar, they talked about the need for an ongoing festival of independent Canadian film and video. Toronto's Festival of Festivals each September is a rather glitzy affair, interested in international features as well as supporting Canadian cinema. But no video. Other annual events such as the Ontario Film Association's Grierson Seminars and Saskatchewan's Yorkton Short Film and Video Festival (one of the longest running festivals in North America) have lately come under fire, stirring up some painful but finally healthy controversy about the role of festivals. The main problem with these established events was readily apparent to Mangaard and Glassman: festivals weren't keeping up with the times. Forums that question practices and intentions, deal with a number of structural and tactical changes, and organize around crucial issues of race, gender, and regionalism are usually limited to one-time events.

What is unique about Images is that it is a festival conceived and run by cultural workers, a group of producers and critics called Northern Visions. Produced on a limited budget, the five-day event—running from to May 3 to 7—succeeded on many fronts; good buzz, great crowds, and the film/video mix contributed to a feeling of solidarity. As with last year's three-night showcase, a preview to Images '89, filmmakers joined the video community's firm stance against censorship and Ontario's Censor Board (now the Film Review Board). Large-screen, high-definition video projection proved exhilarating for video artists and enlightening for naysayers.

Over 70 new works from across Canada, with a special emphasis on Québec (as well as a small international component featuring selections from India, the U.K., and the U.S.), gave a strong indication of the state of independent production in Canada. For a nation whose self-effacing inhabitants have been known to lament the absence of "an industry," the program was extremely vigorous and varied. It was pleasing to have to choose, for once, which screening to attend—Harbourfront or the Euclid Theatre—and deliciously frustrating that it was impossible to see everything.

With such provocatively titled programs as "Gimme Shelter," "Broken Pieces of the Mosaic," and "Films for the End of the Century," curatorial strength and focus was one of the best features of the festival. The majority of the 17 screenings were organized by three regional programmers: Vancouver video artist and critic Sara Diamond, Ottawa-based filmmaker Frances Leeming, and Concordia University professor Tom Waugh from Montréal. In addition, four juried programs (20 works) culled from an open call that netted 160 titles included the likes of Tracey Nelson's three-minute, chroma-key ditty *Body Invaders* playing alongside *Tales from the Gimli Hospital*, the sleeper feature by Guy Maddin who's being groomed as Manitoba's first auteur—the David Lynch of the North. Along with a survey of General Idea's video output, NFB iconoclast Arthur Lipsett's films, including the seminal collage film *Very Nice, Very Nice*, were recognized in a tribute to his forgotten influence on this fiftieth anniversary of the National Film Board (or "funeral," as Waugh later commented). Seeking representation from all parts of Canada, the festival as a whole was sharply attuned to the impact of critical issues on Canadian cultural life.

Given the contextualizing nature of this, or any, festival, viewers were able to see how different producers approach recurring themes, such as "multiculturalism," regionalism, and sexuality

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(last year's festival devoted two screenings to sex stuff). Quebéc-based gay and lesbian producers were well-represented in Waugh's programs, one of the rare opportunities to see Québecois work outside of the province. He also invited recent works from the Indian independent movement. Filmmaker Manjira Datta was there to present her film *The Sacrifice of Babulal Bhuiya*, along with *Voices from Baliapal*, by Vasudha Joshi and Ranjan Palit (who also shot Anand Patwardhen's *Bombay Our City*). Both films invoke plaintive voices from the people of Baliapal and the landless coal-dust salvagers in Bihar, India's poorest region, as a means of combating forces of military encroachment and murderous attack from government goons, which resulted in a worker's death and his subsequent martyrdom. Their inclusion, as well as other incisive works like Martha Rosler's videotape *Born To Be Sold*, globalized the scope of independent production, making crucial connections among the diversity of work.

But good programming can't do everything. Forced to rely on government funding, some of the films and tapes in the festival dealing with race, such as Fred Hollingshurst's *The Last Chinese Laundry* and Penny Joy and Robin Hood's *Creating Bridges*, a complacently-rendered tape about the settlement of Latin American women in B.C., bore the marks of state-sanctioned multiculturalism—the NFB blueprint of diluting complex issues into neat and obedient "race-relations" documentaries.

In contrast, *Qaggig* (*Gathering Place*), by Inuit videomaker Zacharias Kunuk, reinforced the concept that the best work is often produced by members of the community in question. Stunningly shot by Norman Cohn in Arctic blues and frosty interiors, this 58-minute tape from the Northwest Territories is about home life in the thirties, as reenacted by members of the Igloolik community. Mesmerizingly ethnographic in detail but imbued with humor and offhand, personal touches, *Qaggig* is a wonderful reversal of the deterministic, sternly observational style of Flaherty's *Nanook of the North*, the unavoidable comparison. Other highlights of the festival included Leon Johnson's terrifically everyday *Good Afternoon Royal Tower*, Michael Balser and Andy Fabo's mythical conflation of AIDS and Cree lore in *Survival of the Delirious*, and Ray Hagel and Rob Thompson's lark, *The Complete Handbook for Video Artists*.

About 40 of 70 video- and filmmakers represented in the festival attended, and one of its most popular aspects was "Speaking New Media," the daily panel/workshops. Specifically geared towards producers but open to the public, these afternoon sessions covered such topics as dealing with the new Media Literacy curriculum being instituted by school boards across Canada this fall, coping with copyright and other legalities, independents and the NFB, and advice on "Selling Your Stuff," where Neil Seiling of *Alive from Off Center* and Canadian cable reps gave a much-needed pep talk on the marketability of indepen-



**A number of recent works from the Indian independent movement were included in the festival, such as *Voices from Balipal*, by Vasudha Joshi and Ranjan Palit.**

Courtesy filmmaker

dent work. Two very practical sessions, including a walking tour of commercial postproduction houses and a day-long production management workshop, sold out in advance—an indication of the increased pressure to boost production values and increase efficiency.

The final panel, "Programming: Festivals and Our Cultural Identity," provided a forum for Images' organizers to get feedback about the festival. Despite Northern Visions' attention to equitable representation, one participant felt that, although Images gave prominence to the question of regionalism, issues of race weren't adequately addressed. This is part of a larger problem where media access, funding, and education for marginalized groups presents a formidable challege. The Northern Visions collective is one of the few groups attempting to deal with some of these inequities. They recognize the political function of how festivals constitute part of Canada's cultural makeup, not only by creating a public profile for new works and supporting producers, but showing what is possible within the independent sector.

Telefilm Canada, the federal agency that supports the national film and television industry, funded only the workshop/panel portion of Images. In principle, they found the event "too similar to other festivals in the country"; they had also already exhausted all funds for next year's allocation. Images '89 suffered for this lack of support. The festival as a whole was generally underpublicized and attendance was disappointing—both the numbers and the kinds of people involved. Nevertheless, the usual crowd of artist coop members, distributors, film and video producers, arts council staff, and critics, predominately white, middle-class devotees, came out in full force. But Francophones didn't pack the Québecois screenings as they might have; Indo-Canadians didn't have a chance to see what independents in India were doing. Moreover, the festival had difficulty overcoming the chronic problem of generating an audience for Canadian film and video in a market dominated by foreign (i.e., U.S.) works. Crossing audiences is one step in trying to expand forums and exhibition opportunities for independent producers, and Toronto is an ideal site for these efforts. But that's hard to do when Telefilm's Festival Bureau deems you unworthy.

*Helen Lee is a contributing editor of Toronto weekly* Now *magazine and a member of the DEC Film and Video collective.*





# CALL FOR ENTRIES

New York's premiere showcase of short film/video announces 1989 Call for Entries.

The twenty-third annual New York Expo celebrates the art of the short film/video, bringing the best of the new together for a three-day festival at The New School in Greenwich Village.

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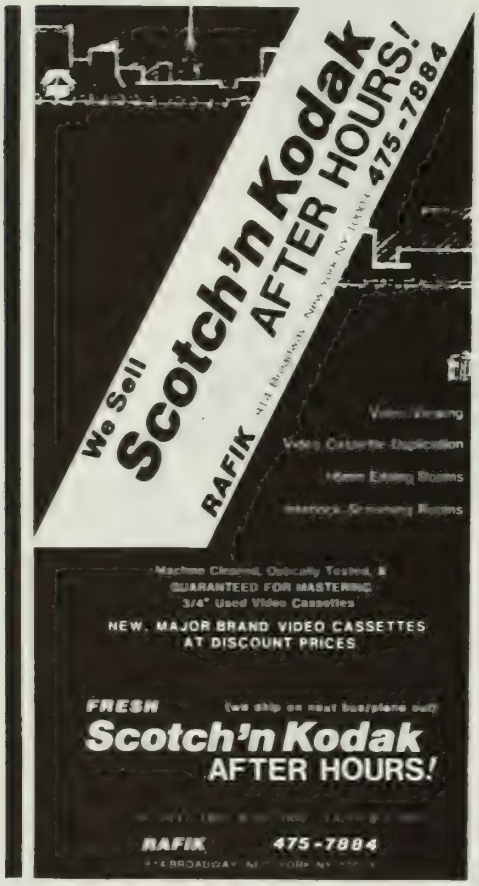
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# IN BRIEF

This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the **FIVF Festival Bureau.** Listings do not constitute an endorsement & since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. If your experience differs from our account, please let us know so we can improve our reliability.

## Domestic

AMERICAN INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL. Nov. 9-12, CA. Dedicated to presentation as well as recognition of Native Americans in cinema, this fest takes place in San Francisco & will celebrate its 14th yr. Program incl. feature films & special programs. Deadline: Sept. 7. Contact: Mike Smith, American Indian Film Festival, 272 E. 12th St., B-2, Oakland, CA 94606; (415) 554-0525.

ASBURY FESTIVAL OF SHORT FILMS, Nov. 17-19, NY. Now in 8th yr, noncompetitive fest highlights short films (under 25 min.) produced in US. Under this yr's theme "The Best of U.S." award-winning shorts selected from major film US fests will be screened w/ new entries from ind. filmmakers in cats of experimental, animation, comedy, doc, drama. Program consists of 3 evenings of 12-20 films each. Held at Haft Auditorium at Fashion Institute of Technology. Format: 16mm. Deadline: Oct. 30. Contact: Doug LeClaire, fest producer, Asbury Film Festival, 21 E. 26th St., New York, NY 10010; (212) 779-9126.

BUCKS COUNTY FILM FESTIVAL, November, PA. 6th nat'l short film competition & tour for independent US films. Over $5000 in prize money & rental fees awarded to over 10 productions. Winning films tour several sites (primarily in PA, but last yr's tour incl. Houston, St. Louis, Chicago, IA & CA) from Nov. through May. Entries should be 30 min. max., completed after Jan. 1987. 1989 judges incl. Margaret Myers, Pittsburgh Filmmakers; Lise Yasui, independent filmmaker. Entry fee: $20. Format: 16mm. Sponsored by Film Five, nonprofit filmmakers coop. Deadline: Oct. 1. Contact: John Toner, Bucks County Film Festival, c/o Smith & Toner, 8 E. Court St., Doylestown, PA 18901; (215) 345-5663 (eves).

NEW YORK EXPO OF SHORT FILM AND VIDEO. Nov. 10-12, NY. One of country's major showcases for best new short independent films & videos, fest seeks short "by the brightest & most daring film/videomakers." Accepts doc, narrative, experimental & animated works; all entries should be under 1 hr. Approx. 50 finalists screened & cash awards & Awards of Merit go to top films in each cat, judged by panel over month-long period. Nonprofit fest run by & for filmmakers on volunteer basis. This yr, Expo is working to expand schedule of screenings, incl. seminars & guest lecturers, award larger cash prizes & expand audiences. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Oct. 1. Contact: NY Expo of Short Film & Video, c/o Fraker Productions, 12 E. 46th St., 5th fl., New York, NY 10017; (212) 697-2530.

PRIZED PIECES INTERNATIONAL VIDEO AND FILM COMPE-

TITION, Nov. 9-12, OH. Established in 1981, int'l competition honors excellence in Black television & film production, awarding works which positively depict Black people & their cultures, lifestyles, histories & concerns throughout world. Award & $600 prize given to producers of winning programs in 7 cats: public affairs, cultural affairs, children/teens, drama, documentary, Black music videos/film, comedy; special cats of best Black ind. producer ($1000 award) & best student filmmaker/videographer recently inaugurated. Works judged on importance of program to people's lives, creative use of production techniques/skills, clarity & originality of program content, creative thematic development, performances quality & aesthetic appeal. Entries must be completed in previous 3-1/2 yrs. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: $35 (independent), $60 (commercial). Deadline: Oct. 6. Contact: Jackie Tshaka, National Black Programming Consortium, 929 Harrison Ave., Ste. 104, Columbus, OH 43215; (614) 299-5355.

WOMEN IN THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR, Mar. 8-12, IL. Under 1989 theme "All the Angles," annual int'l showcase for films & videos by women directors & producers enters 9th yr. Last yr's theme "Risk" incl. cats such as "Bare One's Soul," "Totter on the Brink," "Live against the Grain" & "Lie between the Hammer & the Anvil"; entries came from 6 countries & 15 states. Fest seeks to provide forum for works that "highlight ethnic, political & social diversities, as well as a variety of styles & genres." Entries must be completed since 1984. Will coincide w/ Int'l Women's Day. Entry fee: $20. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on cassette only. Animation, computer graphics, doc, experimental & narrative films accepted. Deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: Gretchen Elsner Sommer, Women in the Director's Chair, 3435 N. Sheffield, Ste. 3, Chicago, IL 60657; (312) 281-4988.

## Foreign

AMIENS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF FILMS AGAINST RACISM AND FOR FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN PEOPLES, November, France. Focused on new, alternative, ind. & emerging cinema involved w/ 3rd World issues & cultural identity & differences, this competitive fest enters 9th edition. Last yr's fest incl. 20 features in competitive selection, along w/ special retros & sidebars. Shorts also programmed. Concurrent market is held, presenting about 150 int'l films during fest (deadline Oct. 20). Deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: Jean-Pierre Garcia, director, Festival International du Film d'Amiens, 36 rue de Noyon, 80000 Amiens, France; tel: 22916123/ 22910144; telex: CHAMCO 140754 (Attn JCA).

DANUBIALE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL DAYS FOR FILM & VIDEO AMATEURS, Sept. 27-Oct. 1, Austria. Nonprofessional films in all cats, under 25 min., accepted for competitive fest held in Krems on the Danube, 70 km west of Vienna. Int'l jury awards Gold, Silver, Bronze medals, as well as special prizes. Fest pays return shipping. Formats: 3/4", 1/2" (PAL), 16mm, super 8, 8mm video. Deadline: Aug. 31. Contact: Danubiale Internationale Festtage für Film-und Videoamateure, postlagernd, A-3504 Krems, Austria.

FESTIVAL DEI POPOLI, Nov. 24-Dec. 2, Italy. Documentary competitive fest for works covering social, political & anthropological issues. In celebration of 30th anniversary, information section will consist entirely of Italian doc films & will resume showcasing int'l production in 1990. Awards: Best Documentary: L20,000,000; Best Research: L10,000,000; Best Ethnographic Documentary: Gian Paolo Paoli Award; Best Documentary nominated by student jury: Silver Award from Ministry of Education; participation certificates to all filmmakers. Award money paid only after print of film or copy of video is deposited in fest's film archive. Preview cassettes will not be returned; films sent for preview will be returned. Work must have been completed after Sept. 1, 1988. Fest pays return shipping for selected films. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4" (produced by TV network); preselection on 1/2". Deadline: Sept. 20. Contact: Mario Simondi, Festival dei Popoli, Via dei Castellani, 8, 50122 Florence, Italy; tel: (055) 294354; telex: 575615 Festip; fax: (055) 213698.

GOLDEN KNIGHT INTERNATIONAL AMATEUR FILM & VIDEO FESTIVAL, Nov. 22-25, Malta. Now in 28th yr, fest open to film & video productions "made for pleasure w/ no commercial purpose in mind." 2 classes: amateur productions by individs, groups or clubs & student or sponsored productions. Entries should be under 30 min., on any subject. Golden Knight & Certificate of Merit awards: A: best production, editing, photography, sound, animation. B: best production. Formats: 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fee: $15 plus return postage. Deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: Amateur Cine Circle, Box 450, Valletta, Malta.

GREEN WEEK BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM COMPETITION, Jan. 29-Feb. 1, W. Germany. Film & television productions on agriculture, environment & food presented in conjunction w/ Int'l Green Week Berlin. Accepted are films about agriculture & rural development (horticulture, viticulture, fisheries, forestry, rural home economics); agriculture & environment (preservation of soil, water, air) & agriculture & human nutrition (food industries, consumer protection); also films w/ info & advice for agriculture. Feature & commercial films excluded. 2 competition cats: films about agriculture, environment, nutrition; films containing info/advice for agriculture. Awards: each cat. awards Golden, Silver & Bronze Ears of Corn; other awards incl. FAO Osiris Award, INFORFILM Agricultural Film Award. All entries receive certificate. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Sept. 30. Contact: Geschäftsstelle Internationaler Filmwettbewerb zur Grünen Woche Berlin, c/o AMK Berlin, Company for Exhibitions, Fairs & Congresses, Messedamm 22, D-1000 Berlin 19, W. Germany; tel: (030) 3038-0; telex: 182908 amkb d; fax: (030) 3038-2325.

HAVANA INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF NEW LATIN AMERICAN CINEMA, Dec. 2-16, Cuba. Passionate celebration of 3rd World cinema, fest, now entering 2nd decade, boasts capacity attendance for annual showcase of more than 100 feature films & 500 documentary, video & TV productions shown in 17 theaters as well as video screening venues. In addition to enthusiastic local audience, over 1400 int'l film professionals attend. This is world's largest fest & market for Latin American film, video & TV, as well as African cinema, productions by African-American filmmakers in western countries & docs on 3rd World topics. Coral Awards given to best films, film scripts, film posters, TV programs & individ. video productions; special awards also presented. Awards categorized for films from Latin America & Caribbean, non-Latin American & Caribbean films & films related to regions. Cats: best fiction, doc, animation, children's editing, acting, script, photography, sound & design. Concurrent market, MECLA, had 225 buyers & sellers from 120 companies from 45 countries. Sponsored by Cuban Film Institute, ICAIC. Deadline: Oct. 15. Contact: International Festival of New Latin American Cinema, Television &


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Video, ICAIC International Film Distributors, Calle 23, No. 1155, Plaza de la Revolucion, Havana 4, Cuba; tel: 34400/305041; telex: 511419 ICAIC CU. Info can also be obtained from Center for Cuban Studies, 124 W. 23rd St., New York, NY 10011; (212) 242-0559.

IGUALADA INTERNATIONAL WEEK OF AMATEUR CINEMA, Oct. 12-21, Spain. Competition for nonprofessional film directors of 16mm & super 8 film. Cats: story; fantasy/cartoon; report/doc. All subjects. Awards: Super 8: Best Film (75,000 ptas. & gold medal), all cats 25,000 ptas. & silver medal; 16mm: Best Film (100,000 ptas. & gold medal), all cats 30,000 ptas. & silver medal. Prizes also awarded for best script, editing & film on travel. Televisió de Catalunya (TV3) Special Broadcasting Prize of 40,000 ptas. to 16mm film (allows broadcast rights for 5 yrs). Deadline: Aug. 13. Contact: Certamen Internacional de Cine Amateur Ciutat d'Igualada, Box 378, 08700 Igualada (Barcelona), Spain; tel: (93) 804 6907; telex: 52038-PBCO E; fax: (93) 804 4362.

NYON INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL, Oct. 13-21, Switzerland. One of world's premiere fests devoted to documentary art form, competitive showcase, now in 21st yr, is particularly interested in docs that investigate contemporary social & political issues in innovative ways, as well as those exploring psychological, cultural & religious themes. All lengths accepted & films & videos screened equally. Work must be produced in preceding yr & be Swiss premieres; preference given to world premieres & films unscreened in other European fests. Awards: Gold Sesterce, Silver Sesterces for different types of docs, certificates of merit & special jury prizes. Accommodation for 3 nights provided for directors of works in competition. Fest director Erika de Hadeln, along w/ Manfred Salzgeber, who programs the Panorama Section of Berlin Int'l Film Festival & consults w/ Nyon, will be in NY to search for possible entries during 1st wk in Aug. They will be staying at the Hotel Mayflower, 61st St. & Central Park W., New York, NY 10023; (212) 265-0060. Contact them through NY liaison: Gordon Hitchens, 214 W. 85th St., #3W, New York, NY 10024; (212) 877-6856/362-0254. Hitchens has entry & regulation forms. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Fest deadline: Sept. 15. Fest address: Nyon International Dcoumentary Film Festival, Case Postale 98, CH-1260, Nyon, Switzerland; tel: 4122/616060; telex: 419811 ELEF CH; fax: 4122/617071.

RIOFEST INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF CINEMA, TELEVISION AND VIDEO, Nov. 22-Dec. 2, Brazil. Now in 6th yr, RioFest is moving for financial reasons to Fortaleza, capital of state of Ceara, about 1500 miles from Rio de Janeiro. Program incl. competitions for film, TV & video. Film section divided into official competition for feature length & short films, out of competition screenings, special screenings & seminars. TV & video sections divided into official competitions, special presentations & seminars. Short films must be under 15 min. Selected videos may participate in official competition in cats of musical (up to 60 min.), documentary (up to 60 min.), experimental (no time limit). Awards: Golden & Silver Tucanos to best feature, director, actress, actor & short; awards in TV competition incl. Golden & Silver Tucanos to best TV program, entertainment program, journalistic program, fiction program; video competition awards incl. Golden & Silver Tucanos to best video, musical, documentary & experimental work. All entries should be Brazilian premieres & Portuguese subtitled. Format: 35mm (official competition), produced after Nov. 1988. Deadline: Oct. 31. Contact: Nei Sroulevich, director, Festival Internacional de Cinema, Televisão e Vão e Vídeo, Rau Paissandu, 362, 22210 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; tel: 285-6642; telex: (21) 22084 FTVR BR.

TALLER DE CINE LA RED FILM ENCOUNTER, Oct. 12-15, Puerto Rico. Held at Institute of Puerto Rican Culture in San Juan, this is 7th yr of showcase for independent noncommercial work. Formats: 3/4", 1/2", 16mm, super 8. Cats: fiction, experimental, documentary, animation. Fest this yr will incl. forum on cinema & its impact on national culture, as well as photo exhibit on history of PR cinema. Deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: Joaquín García, director, Taller de Cine La Red, Box 6992, Santa Rosa Unit, Bayamón, Puerto Rico 00621; (809) 783-3038.

TOKYO VIDEO FESTIVAL, November, Japan. Sponsored by JVC, fest awards both professional & amateur video works on any subject that "promote interest in the emerging video culture." Classifications: Division I (No Limitations): compositions in any style or any theme; Division II (Video Letter Exchange): compositions exploring possibilities of video as means of communication (instead of written word, incl. such themes as lovers, family messages, playing w/ video). Awards: Video Grand Prix (given to 1 of compositions winning work of excellence award) & JVC President Award (selected from all entries for work that expresses enjoyment & excitement unique to a "handmade" video composition): both grant $3500 plus 10-day round trip to Japan for 2, trophy & citation; Division I: Works of Excellence (4): $1500 plus $2000 equivalent in JVC video equipment, trophy & citation; Works of Special


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TOULON INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF MARITIME AND EXPLORATION FILMS, Nov. 14-18, France. 21st edition of fest devoted to films dealing w/ topics relating to sea or exploration, such as oceanology, archeology, naval history, underwater exploration, ethnography, sports, fiction, etc. Work must be produced in last 3 yrs. No entry fee, but entrants pay roundtrip shipping. Awards: Gold, Silver & Bronze Anchors, w/ corresponding cash prizes of 40,000FF, 20,000FF & 10,000FF. Other awards: French Navy Award, Rolex Grand Prize for Subaquatic Wildlife Protection, IFREMER award, World Underwater Activities Confederation Award, Young Director's Award from French Underwater Sports & Studies Federation, French Institute of Sea Award, Press Prize & Audience Prize. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Oct. 15. Contact: Secretariat du Festival du Film Maritime et d' Exploration, 14, rue Peiresc, 83000 Toulon, France; tel: (94) 929922.

TROUVILLE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF TOURISM FILM AND VIDEO CLIPS, Sept. 26-28, France. Held in resort of Trouville, France, to coincide w/ annual Top Resa travel trade fair in Deauville, competitive fest shows films that promote countries, regions, towns, monuments, associations. Accepts works that are traditional in technique, advertising films promoting products as well as destination & "expressionistic documentaries set in a certain place...that definitely make the viewer want to travel." Awards: special jury prize; special tourism prize; young director prize; best publicity film/clip, best musical film. Entry fees: 600FF-2500FF. Deadline: Sept. 1. Contact: Jean-Pierre Greverie, Festival International du Film et du Clip Touristiques, A.S.C., B.P. 19, F-76880 Arques-la-Bataille, France; tel: (33) 35845393; telex: 770432 F; fax: 35401199.

VÖLKERMARKT INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF NON-PROFESSIONAL FILMS, Sept. 2-9, Austria. Competition for amateur films on any subject, awarding prizes for best direction, camerawork, script, editing, accoustic arrangement, sports, documentation. Entry fee: DM10. Formats: 16mm, super 8. Organized by VÖFA, Tourist Board Klopeiner See/Turnersee & Filmclub Völkermarkt. Deadline: Aug. 10. Contact: Paul Kraiger, Haupplatz 11, 9100 Völkermarkt, Austria.


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**Angst is a way of life at age 20 for the characters in *The Long Weekend (o' Despair)*, by Los Angeles-based filmmaker Gregg Araki.**

Courtesy filmmaker

## Renee Tajima

Video artist Lee Eiferman continues the story of Ena Woods, Depression-era photographer, with **Ena's Adventures: Part Two**, which recently premiered on public TV's *New Television* series. In Eiferman's video narrative, Ena, a photographer for the Works Projects Administration during the mid-1930s, is "on the lam" from government agents. Her crime: failing to document the peoples of the western United States. Resisting pressure from the feds for more realistic photographs, she instead uses backdrops to compose her photographs. In a desert town in the American Southwest—near the Los Alamos site of the atomic bombs tests that lay in the near future—Ena encounters young Nick and is seduced by his socialist attitudes and good looks. He wants to create a utopian community on the site of a ghost town and enlists Ena to share in his task. While she labors to bring the dream to fruition, also doing most of the work herself, Nick theorizes and pontificates on "social equality." Ena finally confronts Nick's hypocrisy and the pseudo-socialist's discrepancy between theory and practice is exposed. *Ena's Adventures: Part Two* was produced with a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts and is the winner of the Gold Plaque at the Chicago International Film Festival. *Ena's Adventures: Part Two*: GNP Productions, 105 Douglass St. #1, Brooklyn, NY 11231; (718) 596-5937.

John and Marcie Wienecke were an active and popular suburban couple when doctors found advanced cancer in Marcie's brain, liver, and spine. They gave her three weeks to live. **No Brief Candle**, made by Jane Abbott a year later, looks at two days in the lives of otherwise ordinary people who faced the possibility of death with extraordinary strength. In *No Brief Candle*, John and Marcie share the profound effect that Marcie's diagnosis had on their commitment to each other and discuss the evolution of their own perceptions on living and dying. Fanlight Productions has picked up the tape for distribution. *No Brief Candle*: Fanlight Productions, 47 Halifax St., Boston, MA 02130; (617) 524-0980.

Independent producers Ninia Baehr and Lori Hiris are mobilizing to support the struggle for abortion rights with the production of a documentary entitled **Abortion Revolution**. The 28-minute film will chronicle the pioneers of the abortion rights movement and use history in order to empower young women to take action on their own behalf. It will include archival footage of women's liberation demonstrations, oral histories of abortion rights pioneers, and contemporary interviews with young women. Baehr and Hiris have already begun screening rough-cuts of the footage at 25 workshops with young activists in seven states, regular briefings with the New York State National Abortion Rights Action League membership recruitment staff, and an eight-week program with the State University of New York at Binghamton Pro-Choice Coalition. The producers are seeking donations to complete the film this year, through the sponsorship of Women Make Movies. *Abortion Revolution*: Eliza Productions, Box 335, Canal St. Station, New York, NY 10013; (212) 673-3680.

This column interrupts its made-in-the-U.S.A. policy to inform its readership that the Ministry of Propaganda of Toronto-based Mr. Shack Motion Pictures Ltd. (their motto, "No Guts, No Glory") has wrapped production on **Roadkill**. The feature-length, black and white, rock 'n' roll road movie is set in Northern Ontario and tells the story of a girl who learns how to drive. Formerly entitled *All the Children Are In*, the film is directed by Bruce McDonald, produced by McDonald and Colin Brunton, and features actors Valerie Buhagiar, Gerry Quigley, Nash the Slash, Joey Ramone, Larry Hudson, Kathy Acker, a dog statue, an Irish jib, 12 drunk teenagers, two little kids, a witch, molten slag pour, loud music and dangerous driving, a slow dance, waterfalls, a girl called Ramona, Roman centurions, no squareheads, dubious financing, a meat chopper, various dead animals, a slayfest, a drive-in, the Big Nickel, a polite serial killer, a Winnebago from Hell, and a motley cast of hundreds. *Roadkill*: Mr. Shack Motion Pictures Ltd., 345 Adelaide St. W., Ste. 605, Toronto, Ontario M5V 1R5, Canada; (416) 595-9867.

Los Angeles-based filmmaker Gregg Araki has just completed his second feature film, **The Long Weekend (o' Despair)**, described by its creator as "a minimalistic gay/bisexual postpunk antithesis to the smug complacency of regressive Hollywood tripe like *The Big Chill*." Shot on the streets of Los Angeles, with no crew, budget, and probably no liability insurance, the 93-minute movie explores the zany, angst-filled holiday weekend reunion of three friends from college who, along with their significant others, learn how people and the times change—the hard way. Michael, Rachel, and Sara, like the cast of Araki's first feature, *Three Bewildered People in the Night*,

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*Roadkill*, a black and white, rock 'n' roll road movie from Canada, tells the story of a girl who learns how to drive.

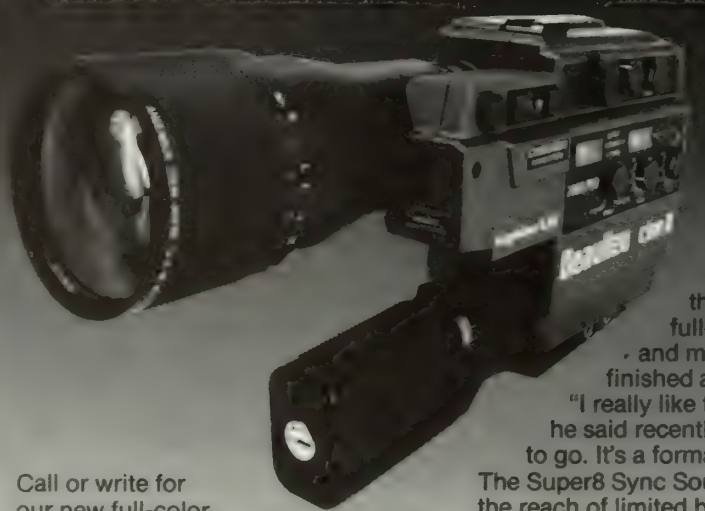
Photo: Chris Buck

are alienated, cynical, bored, and 20. Araki shot *The Long Weekend* with a handwound Bolex, featuring six new actors from the Los Angeles performing scene: Bretton Vail, Maureen Dondanville, Andrea Beane, Nicole Dillenberg, Marcus D'Amico, and Lance Woods. The film premiered on opening night of the AFI/LA Fest, and has already begun to circulate on the international film festival circuit. *The Long Weekend*: Desperate Pictures Ltd., 740 S. Detroit St., #1, Los Angeles, CA 90036; (213) 857-5963.

From Yellow Springs, Ohio, independent producers Casi Pacilio and L.M. Keys have completed their first feature, **Out of Our Time**, a 70-minute film that examines the issues, choices, and struggles of two circles of women. One group is part of a literary and artistic circle in 1930s Chicago. At its center is Jacquelyn Matthews, a writer for a prominent fashion magazine whose dream is to publish her own works. Her granddaughter Valerie Ward is the link with the second circle, set in contemporary times. She is a typesetter for a small urban feminist newspaper, with similar interest in publishing her poetry. *Out of Our Time* was produced by Back Porch Productions, a newly-established women's media collective founded by Pacilio and Keys, now joined by Christina Springer. The film was funded by the Yellow Springs Arts Council and has been picked up for distribution by Women Make Movies and premiered at the International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival in Chicago last year. *Out of Our Time*: Back Porch Productions, 502 Livermore St., #2, Yellow Springs, OH 45387; (513) 767-9190.

The Camden, Maine, independent production company Varied Directions will produce a six-part series entitled **Making Sense of the Sixties**, with WETA-TV, Washington, D.C.'s public television station. Slated for broadcast on PBS during late 1990, the series will provide an overview of the tumultuous period in American history, with episodes focusing on early events of the decade, the people described as "the sixties generation," the counterculture, the politics of the period, social change, and the impact of the decade today. Varied Directions received a $2.3-million from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and PBS' Challenge Fund for *Making Sense of the Sixties*. Its producers have already begun a national search for films, home movies, and still photographs that portray the major events of the time and reflect the sixties experience. *Making Sense of the Sixties*: Varied Directions, 69 Elm St., Camden, ME 04843; (207) 236-0711, fax: (207) 236-4512.


# How Serious Can You Get In Super 8?



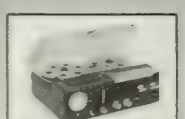
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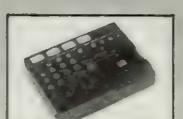
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# CLASSIFIEDS

The Independent's **Classifieds** column includes all listings for "Buy • Rent • Sell," "Freelancers" & "Postproduction" categories. It is restricted to members only. Each entry has a **250 character limit** & costs **$20 per issue.** Ads exceeding this length will be edited. Payment must be made at the time of submission. Anyone wishing to run a classified ad more than once must pay for each insertion & indicate the number of insertions on the submitted copy. Each classified ad must be typed, double-spaced & worded exactly as it should appear.

Deadlines for **Classifieds** will be respected. These are the 8th of each month, **two months** prior to the cover date, e.g., August 8 for the October issue. Make check or money order—no cash, please—payable to FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.

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TRANSCRIPT SPECIALIST: Transcripts from audio tapes, speedy turn-around, specializing in documentary. References: Kevin Rafferty (*Atomic Cafe*), Robert Stone (*Radio Bikini*). $2.50/page. Disk copies available. Call for arrangements. (407) 645-2638.

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BROADCAST QUALITY EDITING: Edit from Betacam, 3/4" or 3/4" SP. $99/hr including operator, switcher, slo-mo. 50% discount on DVE for AIVF members. Call HDTV Enterprises, Inc., near Lincoln Center (212) 874-4524.

16MM FLATBEDS FOR RENT: 6-plate flatbeds for rent in your workspace or fully equipped downtown editing room w/ 24-hour access. Cheapest rates in NYC for independent filmmakers. Call Philmaster Productions (212) 873-4470.

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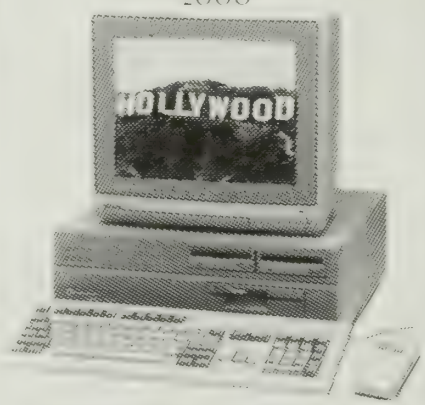
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# NOTICES

**Notices** are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. **The Independent** reserves the right to edit for length.

Deadlines for **Notices** will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date, e.g., August 8 for the October issue. Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

## Conferences • Workshops

BAY AREA VIDEO COALITION: Aug. workshops: Using the Chyron VP2, Aug. 1 & 2; Production Switcher, Aug. 8 & 9; Pinnacle Intensive, Aug. 12 & 13; Intermediate Lighting: Portraits, Aug. 12; Intermediate Lighting: Dramatic, Aug. 13; Camera Techniques for Documentary & Industrial Video, Aug. 17, 19, 26; Computer Editing on the CMX 3100, Aug. 19, 20, 22, 24. Contact: Workshops, BAVC, 111-17th St., San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 861-3279.

BOSTON FILM/VIDEO FOUNDATION: Aug. workshops: 16mm Film Production II: Sync Sound; 16mm Film Editing; Basic Video; Intro to 3/4" Editing; Time Code Editing; Intro to Video Paint Systems; 3D Modeling & Creative Applications on the Video Paint System. Contact: BF/VF, 1126 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540.

CENTER FOR NEW TELEVISION: Aug. workshops: Basic Video Prod., 6 wks beg. Aug. 1; HMI Lighting Seminar, Aug. 2; Desktop Computer Animation, Aug. 19. Contact: Center for New TV, 912 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60605; (312) 427-5446.

FILM IN THE CITIES: Aug. workshop: Lighting for Film & Video, Aug. 1-5. Contact: Lightworks, Film in the Cities, 2388 University Ave., St. Paul, MN 55114.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON 3RD WORLD & MINORITY PROGRAMMING: Sponsored by Rockefeller Foundation, New York State Council on the Arts & Film News Now Foundation, late Sept. in New York City. Contact: Willie Boston, Film Program, NYSCA, 915 Broadway, New York, NY 10010; (212) 614-3985.

OREGON ART INSTITUTE: Aug. seminars: filmmaker Bushra Azzouz, Aug. 3; animator David Ehrlich, Aug. 6; filmmaker Roland Legiardi-Laura, Aug. 11, 12 & 13. Aug. classes: Producing the Foreign Documentary, taught by Legiardi-Laura, Aug. 12; World of Animation, taught for children by Ehrlich, Aug. 7-10. Contact: Oregon Art Institute, 1219 SW Park Ave., Portland, OR 97205; (513) 226-2811.

PROJECT VITAL: Nat'l program that teaches skills in cable TV to people w/ mental retardation & other developmental challenges. Students learn operation on camera, lights & crew, produce their own projects & appear as guests on a talk show. Contact: Little City Foundation, 4801 W. Peterson Ave., Chicago, IL 60646; (312) 282-2207.

VOLUNTEER LAWYERS FOR THE ARTS: Work for Hirc seminar, Sept. 28, 7 pm, Pfizer Auditorium, 235 E. 42nd St., New York, NY. Contact: VLA, 1285 Ave. of the Americas, 3rd fl., New York, NY 10019; (212) 977-9270.

WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA, EAST is sponsoring all-day symposium "Writing Pictures to Persuade: The Informational Film Market," October 19. Covers business of writing film, video & audio-visuals for companies, government & nonprofit institutions. For information contact: WGA, 333 W. 57th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 245-6180.

## Films • Tapes Wanted

ART AGAINST APARTHEID encourages cultural orgs to make anti-apartheid work a part of their fall 1989 program. Art Against Apartheid will include participating programs on its city-wide calendar. Contact: AAA/Foundation for Community of Artists, Box 20950, New York, NY 10009.

CHANNEL L WORKING GROUP invites video artists to submit 3/4" or 1/2" tapes for award-winning 10-week cable series *Video Spectrum*. Series shown throughout Manhattan. All works must be shot in video, max. length 28 min. All genres accepted but must deal w/ social or political issues. People of color strongly urged to apply. $16-20/min. paid for selected works. Deadline: Aug. 31. Send tapes plus SASE & phone number to: Video Spectrum, Channel L Working Group, 51 Chambers St., Rm. 532, New York, NY 10007; (212) 964-2960.

FILM CRASH seeks films for regular NYC screenings of independent prods. Contact: Matthew Harrison (212) 673-3335; Karl Nussbaum (718) 636-5496; Scott Saunders (718) 643-6085; or write Film Crash, 423 Atlantic Ave. #4A, Brooklyn, NY 11217.

THE LEARNING CHANNEL seeks films/videos for anthology series about growing up in America as part of *The Independents* series. Series to incl. 20-30 works in 13 1-hr shows. TLC buys nonexclusive cable & PBS rights. 1 (800) 346-0032 for entry forms. Deadline: late summer/early fall.

SELECT MEDIA: Educational film distributor seeks films & videos for educ. market. Health, social, or youth-oriented preferred. Contact: Heather Nancarrow, Select Media, 74 Varick St., Ste. 305, New York, NY 10013; (212) 431-8923.

## Opportunities • Gigs

FILM NEWS NOW FOUNDATION seeks program director & distribution coordinator/administrative ass't. Both positions full-time. Film News is nonprofit org. involved in film prod., fiscal sponsorship, consultations to independent producers, Word of Mouth poetry series & service-advocacy projects focusing on producers of color. Contact: Film News, 335 W. 38th St., 5th fl., New York, NY 10013; (212) 971-6061.

CHANNEL L WORKING GROUP has several positions open: 1. Production supervisor to work w/ community groups in cable TV production. Requires camera & editing skills, direction of live studio productions, budget preparation. Deadline: Aug. 15. 2. Part-time video trainer w/ skills in live studio production, location shooting, 3/4" editing & ability to train college interns

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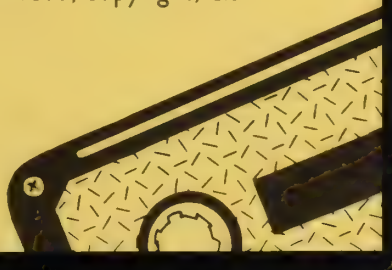
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& community volunteers. Possible growth to full-time. Deadline: immediate. People of color encouraged to apply. Send cover letter, resumé & (for prod. supervisor) salary requirements to: Executive Director, Channel L Working Group. 3. Student interns & volunteers also sought to act as producers, directors & assistant directors of cable programs this fall. No previous production exp. required. Must be avail. to work 15 hrs/wk minimum. Contact: Intern supervisor, Channel L Working Group, 51 Chambers St. Rm 532, New York, NY 10007; (212) 964-2960.

PBS' Childrens & Cultural Programming Dept. seeks associate director, humanities, to review, evaluate & oversee proposals & productions & serve as liaison w/ community. BA w/ graduate work in humanities or media preferred. Required: minimum 5 yrs exp. in production &/or programming, exp. w/ humanities funding orgs & strong written & verbal communication skills. Public TV exp. preferred. Salary commensurate w/ exp. Excellent benefits. Submit letter, resumé & salary requirements to: PBS, 1320 Braddock Place, Alexandria, VA 22314, Attn: Carla Gibson.

## Publications

Behind the Lens: Assn. of Professional Camerawomen membership directory now available. Contact: Behind the Lens, Box 1039, Santa Monica, CA 90406.

Foundation Center has just published *Foundation Fundamentals for Nonprofit Organizations*, outlining basics of how to research foundation grants & steps necessary to prepare & target grant proposals effectively. $19.95 plus $2 shipping & handling. Contact: Foundation Center, 79 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10003.

Part of the Solution: Innovative Approaches to Nonprofit Funding report by Institute for Public Policy & Administration now available. Complete report $15; single recommendation paper $3. Contact: Institute for Public Policy & Administration, 1400 20th St. NW, Ste. 118, Washington, DC 20036.

## Resources • Funds

Alaska State Council on the Arts Project Grant deadline: Nov. 1. Contact: ASCA, 619 Warehouse Ave., Ste. 220, Anchorage, AK 99501-1682; (907) 279-1558.

1989-90 Fulbright Grant w/ the UK: Special fellowship in film & TV designed for emerging & mid-career professionals, geared toward practitioner rather than academic. Deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: Steven Blodgett/Michael Doyle, Council for Int'l Exchange of Scholars, 3400 International Dr. NW, Ste. M-500, Washington, DC 20008-3097; tel. (202) 686-6239; fax (202) 362-3442; telex 23-7401891-CIES UC.

Independent Production Fund: Grants upwards of $5000 to film & video makers from TX, AK, OK, MS, KS, NB, PR & USVI. Deadline: Aug. 1. Contact: IPF89, Southwest Alternate Media Project, 1519 W. Main, Houston, TX 77006.

Intermedia Arts Media Arts Production Awards of equipment & facilities use & support to artists working in video, electronic music, computer graphics,


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animation & performance. Awards based on submitted proposals for creation or production of whole or partial projects. 6-10 awards given annually. Appl. deadlines: Aug. 1 & Nov. 1. Indiv. emerging or prof. artists or groups of collaborating artists eligible, w/ no residential requirements. Contact: Intermedia Arts, 425 Ontario St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 627-4444.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS: Deadlines: Narrative Film Development, Sept. 15; Radio Projects, Oct. 10; Film/Video Production, Nov. 13. Contact: Media Arts Program, NEA, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20506; (202) 786-0278.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES: Humanities Projects in Media deadline: Sept. 15. Contact: James Dougherty, NEH, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20506; (202) 786-0278.

NEW YORK COUNCIL ON THE HUMANITIES: Speakers in the Humanities Program invites humanities scholars to submit proposals for inclusion in program. Selected scholars may present up to 5 lectures annually & will receive $250 honorarium & travel reimbursement for each engagement. Appl. deadline: Oct. 13. Contact: Speakers Program, NYCH, 198 Broadway, 10th floor, New York, NY 10038.

NEW YORK FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS: Fellowships in Film deadline: Sept. 11; Fellowships in Video deadline: Oct. 2. Contact: NYFA, 5 Beekman St., New York, NY 10038; (212) 233-3900.

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS: Regrants for Community Arts Programs administered by Cultural Council Foundation. Avail. to community-based organizations in Manhattan seeking support for arts & cultural activities during 1990. Any nonprofit org. based in Manhattan that has not submitted appl. to NYSCA for FY90 is eligible to apply for a Decentralization Grant. Contact: CCF, Decentralization Dept., 625 Broadway, 8th fl, New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-5660.

RHODE ISLAND STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS: Artist Development Grant deadline: Aug. 1 & Dec. 1; Artist Projects, Dec. 1. Contact: RISCA, 95 Cedar St., Ste. 103, Providence, RI 02903.

SOUTH CAROLINA ARTS COMMISSION: Appl. deadlines: Artists Fellowships, Sept. 15; Artists Projects, Jan. 15. Contact: SCAC, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201.

STUDY ABROAD IN THE VISUAL ARTS: Fulbright & other grant opportunities for study abroad in film & video: Fulbright Grants, Lusk Memorial Fellowships, Annette Kade Fellowships & Miguel Vinciguerra Fellowships. Appl. deadline: Oct. 31. Contact: US Student Programs Div., Institute of Int'l Educ., 809 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017.

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE: Grants Program for scholarship, educ., training & public information in int'l peace & conflict mgmt. Appl. deadlines: Oct. 1, Feb. 1. Contact: US Institute of Peace, Grants Program, 1550 M St. NW, Ste 700, Washington, DC 20005-1708; tel: (202) 457-1700; fax: (202) 429-6063.

WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA, EAST FOUNDATION will provide 4 Documentary Writers Fellowships of $5,000 each. Applicants must have established interest in independently produced video docs & projects funded by these grants be produced on or transferred to videotape. Deadline: Sept. 1. Contact: WGAE Foundation, 555 W. 57th St., New York, NY 10019.

## Trims & Glitches

AIVF MEMBER winners of Independent Filmmaker Grants awarded by the American Film Institute: Jan Andrews, *Lysystrata Revisited*; David Blair, *Wax or the Discovery of Television Among the Bees*; Betzy Bromberg, *Bliss/Bluff*; Helen DeMichiel, *Turn Here, Sweet Corn*; Loni Ding, *A 60's Journal of an Asian American*; Amy Kravitz, *Cockadoodledoo*; Lisa Leeman, *Metamorphosis: Man into Woman*; Mimi Pickering & Anne Johnson, *Chemical Valley*; Marlon Riggs, *Color Adjustment: Blacks in Primetime*; Catherine Russo, *Desaparecidos*; Gretchen Somerfeld, *Cafe*; Steven Subotnick, *The Invisible Hunter & His Wife*.

MASSACHUSETTS ARTISTS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM AWARD winners incl. Film Fellows: Yule Caise; Film Finalists: Christian Pierce, Daniel Eisenberg, Robbie Leppzer & Robb Moss; Video Finalists: Daniel Hartnett. Congratulations!

CONGRATS to Diana Coryat & Sarina Printup who have been awarded a grant from the Astraea Foundation for *Inside the Turtle's Shell*.

KUDOS to Amee Evans, producer/director of *The River Farmer* & winner of a CINE Golden Eagle & American Film & Video Festival Blue Ribbon.

CALOGERO SALVO has received a $70,000 production grant from the Foreign Affairs Ministry of France for his 1st feature, *Terra Nova*, to be shot in Venezuela this fall. Congratulations!

CONGRATULATIONS to Dayna Goldfine & Daniel Geller, whose film *Isadora Duncan: Movement from the Soul* has received a CINE Golden Eagle, a Golden Gate Award from the San Francisco Film Fest & a Silver Award from the Houston Int'l Film Fest.

KUDOS TO AIVF PRESIDENT Robert Richter, who has earned a place in the prestigious Global 500 Roll of Honour by the United Nations Environment Programme.

CONGRATS to Micki Dickoff, winner of two Emmy Awards from the New England Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences.

SLAWOMIR GRUNBERG's documentary *When the Family Gets AIDS* has earned awards from the Sinking Creek Film Celebration, Slice of Life Film & Video Showcase & Athens Int'l Film & Video Fest. Congratulations!

CONGRATS also to Karen Goodman, whose work-in-progress, *Intuition: A Voyage with R. Buckminster Fuller*, received an NEA Media Arts Grant.

KUDOS to Lesley Ann Patten, whose *Dancemaker* netted the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's Silver Award for best locally produced documentary by an independent.


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The Blue Coyote is seeking short films for participation in the upcoming Blue Coyote Film Festival to be held in New York City during the week of December 3, 1989. Blue Coyote is accepting films in six categories: Narrative, Animated (including Picsolated, and Computer generated), Documentary and Experimental, Music Video and Student Work. In order to maintain the fairest judging standard the festival has subdivided each category into particular time groups.

**•Maximum time on any film is 30 minutes**



***NARRATIVE: (5 minutes or under), (5-30 minutes)***
***ANIMATED: (5 minutes or under)***
***DOCUMENTARY: (5 minutes or under), (5-30 minutes)***
***EXPERIMENTAL: (5 minutes or under), (5-30 minutes)***
***MUSIC VIDEO: (Time is only determined by song length)***
***STUDENT WORK: (5 minutes or under), (5-30 minutes)***



**•Deadline for submission to the festival is September 15, 1989**

The Blue Coyote was created to allow gifted young filmmakers the opportunity to have their work seen and appreciated not only for the time of the festival, but also the chance to have his/her work placed on a winners' compilation video to be distributed nationally under the auspices of the festival. Blue Coyote is also working in conjunction with several large cable networks to enable festival participants the further chance of having their work viewed on television.

Through our sponsorship Blue Coyote is also offering a cash and/or service and/or equipment prizes to the winners, as well as a production grant.

Completed work **must be submitted for viewing on 1/2" or 3/4" video tape.** Rough cuts will be accepted if the work in progress can be assured of completion by October 15, 1989. (Works in progress may still be shown at the festival if the judges feel that it is appropriate, but will not be eligible for awards) — All films entered must be accompanied by a brief synopsis as to content and context (Judges will make final decision as to category placement). Please provide personal contacting information on the same sheet.

Final judging will begin after the September 15 deadline, but films will be viewed as they are received -- so early submissions are greatly appreciated.

**Entry fees for work submitted are $35.00 for all work (in any category), and $30.00 for any student film submitted.**

Please make check or money orders payable to **Blue Coyote Inc.** Entries and payment to be sent to **217 East 85th Street, Suite 340, New York, NY 10028. Telephone (212) 439-1158.**

# MEMORANDA

## AIVF THANKS...

The following people and organizations who have sent additional contributions to AIVF's Emergency Legislative Fund. The fund was established to support AIVF's successful lobbying efforts for an Independent Production Service for public television and for its subsequent involvement in the process of setting up the IPS. The most recent contributors are:

Ann Alter, Chris Beaver, Arthur Boudine, Roy Campanella, Howard Gladstone, David W. Haas, Mark Irwin, Thomas Johnson Jr., Elizabeth Kreutz, Leandra Little, Mason Productions, Bienvenida Matias, Allen Moore, Mark Mori, Stevenson Palfi, Yvonne Rainer, Robert Richter, Susan Saltz, Samuel Sills, William Simonett, Wendy Naomi Sodetani, Peggy Stern, and Lise Yasui.

Contributions are still welcome and should be sent to: AIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.

## CORRECTION

In Sally Stein's article, "To Color, or Not to Color: Debates between Entrepreneurs, Auteurs and Audiences on the Sanctity of Hollywood Classics" (July 1989), a date in the footnotes was incorrect. Karen Greene's letter to the *New York Times*, cited in footnote 26, appeared on September 4, 1988, not 1985 as was inaccurately noted.

## FIVF TAPE LIBRARY

The FIVF Festival Bureau has established a tape library of members' current works to expedite screenings for upcoming film and video festivals. Members interested in depositing their work in the library should contact: Kathryn Bowser, Festival Bureau director, FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012, (212) 473-3400. 1/2" and 3/4" tapes will be accepted.

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## AIVF REGIONAL CORRESPONDENTS

AIVF has recently instituted a network of regional correspondents, who will provide membership information, hold meetings, and aid recruitment in areas of the country outside New York City. AIVF Members are urged to contact them about AIVF-related needs and problems, about your activities, and other relevant information and news:

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# PROGRAM NOTES

Patricia Thomson
***Managing Editor,* The Independent**

This past year has been one of steady growth for *The Independent*. Thanks to a significant upswing in advertising revenues, we have been able to devote more pages each issue to editorial content—bringing more practical information, news and analysis, technical, legal, and business tips—more food for thought every month.

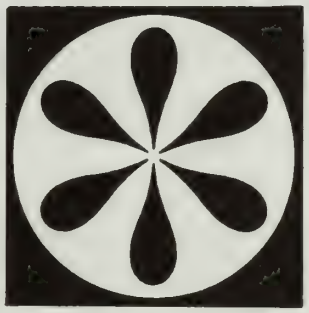
One area *The Independent* has given an increased amount of coverage is legal matters. In a survey *The Independent* conducted last summer many of our readers indicated interest in more information on "copyright and contracts, over and over"—in one reader's words—plus a variety of other legal topics. We have covered legal aspects of various kinds of rights entailed in independent production: fair use and television news footage, moral rights and the Berne Convention on copyrights, music rights, and copyright infringement decisions. We've looked at production contracts, both generic and those with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Learning Channel, state humanities councils, and video art distributors—and provided some guidelines and caveats. There have also been articles discussing assorted other legal topics: the revisions in the federal tax code that affect freelance producers, title protection and title reports, screenplay option agreements. In this issue Todd Alan Price and Gary Baddeley examine music rights. Several more articles by entertainment lawyers are now in the works, including coverage of the areas of defamation and work for hire.

As the official publication of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, *The Independent* is also a source of news about other AIVF members. New and upcoming productions by members are featured in Renee Tajima's "In and Out of Production" column. Members are encouraged to send us verbal descriptions of their recent films and videotapes, accompanied by black and white photographs, for inclusion in the column. Although we may not be able to write up your work immediately, we profile every AIVF member's film or tape for which we receive adequate information. We rely on you to keep us posted of what's premiering or in the pipeline. Just send your materials to: Renee Tajima, In and Out of Production, *The Independent*, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.

The past year has also seen improvements in *The Independent*'s availability in newsstands and bookstores on the West Coast, with the addition of two new distributors—one in Los Angeles and another in Seattle. AIVF members can help strengthen our presence there and elsewhere in the country by sending in suggestions for potential retail outlets. If you know of a bookstore that carries film, video, and television magazines where *The Independent* is not sold, mail us the store's name, address, phone, and, if possible, the manager's name; send it to *The Independent*, attn: Managing Editor.

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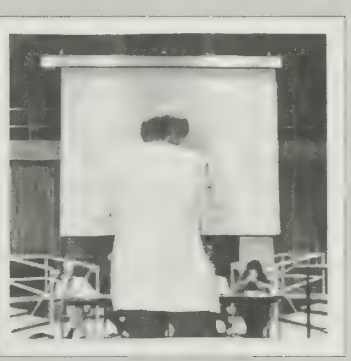
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**AIVF Elects New Board Members**





6



22



31

COVER: Avant-garde film was the subject of a week-long gathering in Toronto this summer, which Paul Arthur reviews in "No More Causes? The International Experimental Film Congress." Amidst the debates about the purity and politics of experimental movements were screenings of new and old avant-garde films, including a major retrospective of Hollis Frampton's films (pictured: still from *Hapax Legomena III: (Critical Mass)*, 1971). This issue also highlights an assortment of conferences and festivals from around the world, with work ranging from indepedent features at Cannes to video production in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Photo courtesy Anthology Film Archives.

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Letters to **The Independent** should be addressed to the editor. Letters may be edited for length.

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**AIVF/FIVF STAFF MEMBERS:** Lawrence Sapadin, executive director; Ethan Young, membership/programming director; Kathryn Bowser, festival bureau director; Morton Marks, audio/business manager; Sol Horwitz, Short Film Showcase project administrator; Mary Jane Skalski, administrative assistant.

## CREDITS DUE

*To the editor:*

It was with great pleasure that we read the article titled "Not Just Black and White—AIDS Media and People of Color" [by Catherine Saalfield and Ray Navarro, July 1989]. Our satisfaction was even greater because that issue featured a cover depicting our video, *Ojos Que No Ven*, which was positively presented in the above mentioned article.

However, we would like to point out some errors that appeared in the article. Instituto Familiar de la Raza, a Latino mental health institute, was incorrectly identified as the producer of *Ojos Que No Ven*. Instituto Familiar was the sponsoring agency. They own the rights and are responsible for distributing the videotape, but it was originally conceived by us and proposed to the Instituto for funding. During production, the Instituto acted as the fiscal agent and shared its ties to the community. Nonetheless, our company Adinfinitum Films produced the tape, a fact that is never acknowledged in the article.

At one point, the authors write, "For those with a background in art or film, it's not too difficult to create conventional, realistic documentaries or docudramas. But the community-based films and tapes we will discuss here weren't produced by such individuals.... [The works] are produced by the staff members of community service centers...." Although we cannot speak for the other videos discussed in the article, in the case of *Ojos Que No Ven*, we would like to refute this statement because we feel that it misrepresents us and our professionalism. We are both professional producers with degrees in film production from San Francisco State University as well as extensive experience in independent film and video production/direction. The crew was composed of professional technicians, including assistant director Amilcar Claro, who was AD on *Kiss of the Spider Women*, and production coordinator Susana Muñoz Blaustein, well known for her Academy Award-nominated documentary *Las Madres de Plaza de Mayo*.

Later the article states, "The program's technical quality can be attributed to the assistance of a professional production company, but the carefully conceived style and content are the result of community involvement and collaboration." We believe that community involvement is essential to the creation of culturally sensitive films and videos. As responsible independent minority producers, whose main goal is to create effective education videos, we have always worked in close contact with our community. This usually entails bringing in community educators and members of the target audience to analyze and discuss the work in progress and to provide feedback so as to insure the cultural sensitivity of the work. This process must be closely monitored by the producer who distills the information and incorporates it in the finished piece. We feel the success of *Ojos Que No Ven* was largely due to this process. But the article implies that the community came together of its own volition and produced a video—an idea that belittles our catalyzing work as independent producers who in fact brought the community together to make *Ojos Que No Ven* possible.

We feel that a magazine such as *The Independent*, which supports the efforts of the independent producer, should take greater care in getting the facts straight and giving credit where credit is due. Unfortunately we were never contacted by the authors of the article. As you know, the independent producer, and especially those of us who work with community-based agencies, must often work with very low budgets and minimal salaries. As such, our only wealth lies on our track record and the work we may receive based on our previous achievements.

*—José Gutiérrez and José Vergelin*
producers/directors, *Ojos Que No Ven*
San Francisco, CA

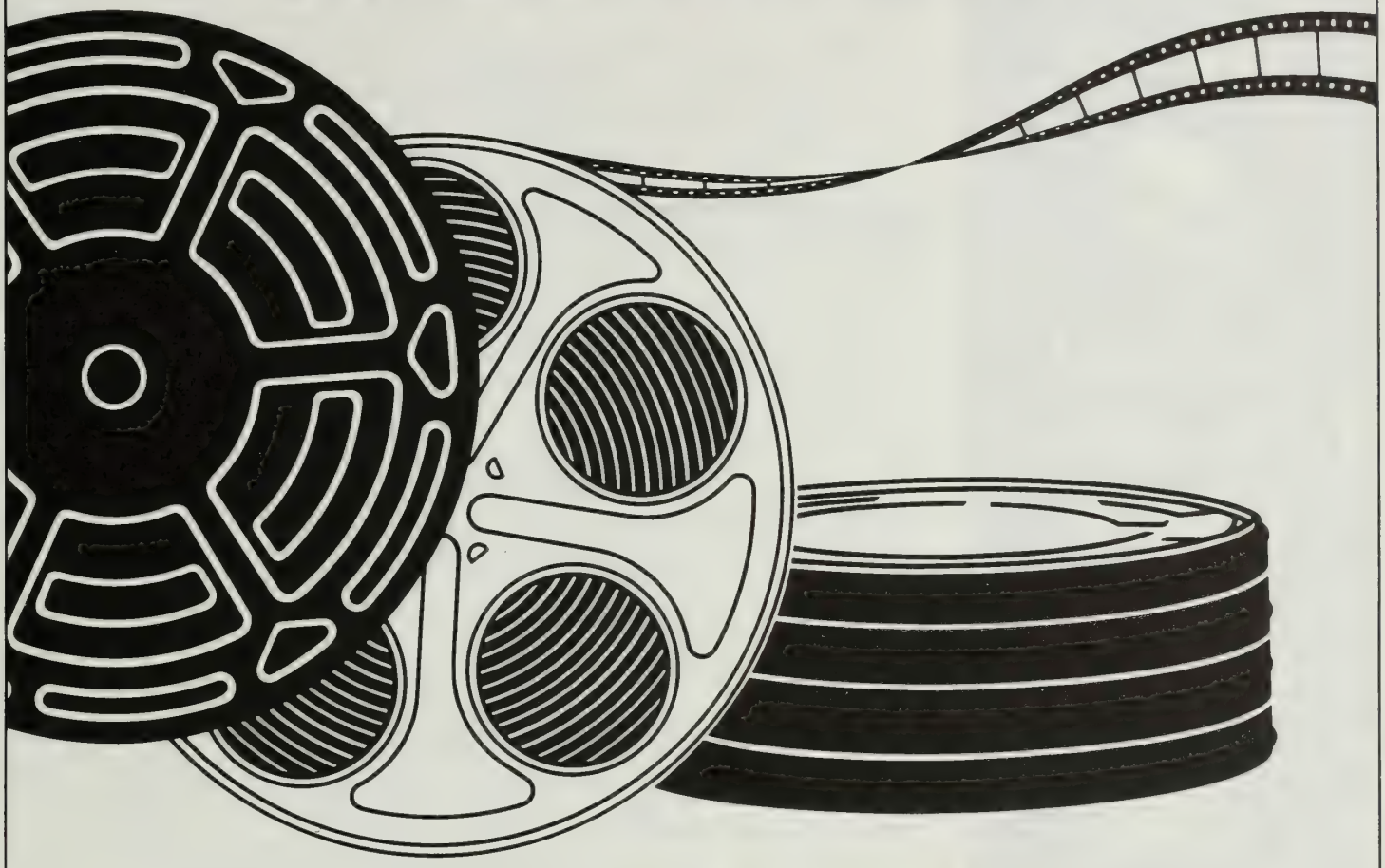
*Catherine Saalfield and Ray Navarro reply:*

The points made in José Gutiérrez and José Vergelin's letter are well taken. While conducting research for our article, the major trend we encountered was insistence on the community origins and involvement of community members in the productions we profiled. Our enthusiasm for this aspect of these works led us to emphasize the grassroots quality and community-based function of *Ojos* over professional and/or individual participation. As independent producers ourselves, and in agreement with your comments, we recognize the importance of giving and getting credit when credit is due.

When we wrote, "...assistance of a professional production company...[versus] results of community involvement and collaboration," we located the *Ojos* producers as participants on the more innovative and noteworthy side of "collaboration." Our intention here was to give people with different degrees of experience in, and access to, film/video production encouragement to explore the potentials of the collective process.

The grassroots and community-based style which *Ojos* exemplifies is not in itself a unique process. However, the production of the majority of effective AIDS media under these circumstances is unprecedented, and that was the focus of our article. We in no way intended to undermine Gutiérrez and Vergelin's qualifications as professional producers but rather to highlight their role as community members who enabled an underrepresented—usually misrepresented—

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community to be integral to their educational project.

In preparing the article, we interviewed *Ojos*' scriptwriter Rodrigo Reyes and discussed distribution issues with Anne Foster of the Instituto.

## TAKING SIDES ON THE MIDDLE EAST

*To the editor:*

"Promises, Promises: Programs on the Palestinian Intifada Accused of Bias" [July 1989] raised important issues concerning self-censorship and public television. Clearly, the Palestinian issue has many PBS stations worried about negative reaction from funders and those politically opposed to hearing anything approaching the "other side." We feel it is only fair to give credit where it's due, and recognize PBS stations which are not afraid to handle these prickly issues. WVIZ in Cleveland (which was misrepresented as WBIZ in "Promises, Promises") should not be lumped in with stations that have exercised self-censorship on the Palestinian issue.

Though the station has not aired *Letter from Palestine*, WVIZ was the first public television station in this country to air a film dealing with the *most* taboo of topics relating to the Palestinians: the situation of Palestinians displaced during the 1948 War. *Native Sons: Palestinians in Exile* documents the experiences of Palestinians who are still refugees in Lebanon, denied the "right of return" to their homes by the government of Israel for more than 40 years.

*Native Sons* has faced a labyrinthine gauntlet of "self-censorship" in the United States, though it has had fairly wide broadcast in Europe and Australia. Suffice it to say that *Native Sons* got tarred with the same *Triumph of the Will* brush Chloe Aaron applied to *Days of Rage*. PBS National wouldn't touch *Native Sons*. In fact, it took a year for anyone there to even find the time in their busy schedules to look at it. WVIZ aired *Native Sons* last November. The station presented the film without any ping-pong panel of experts to color viewers' perceptions. This was the boldest move any PBS affiliate in the country has made relative to programming on the Middle East. Readers of *The Independent* should be aware of WVIZ's track record before lumping the station with cowards and racists. That said, we applaud *The Independent* for focusing on the suppression of programming about the Palestinian situation.

*—Riad Bahhur and Tom Hayes*
producers, *Native Sons*
Columbus, OH

*To the editor:*

Your article about *Days of Rage* misses the point. The problem is not the attempted censorship of the film, but that *Days of Rage* is only one of a series of pro-Arab, anti-Israel films that PBS and WNET have shown during the past 10 to 12 years without showing the other side. It is not an alternative view; it is the only view being presented.

When I spoke to PBS and WNET about this problem, a spokesman admitted that their programs have generally been one-sided. They claim that this is not due to bias, but a result of not having received any objective or pro-Israel films which meet their criteria. Should they receive any, I was told, they would show them. We shall see.

If PBS were the exception, the situation would not be so unfortunate, but the networks are as guilty as PBS in their one-sided and distorted presentation of the Arab-Israel conflict. Several years ago I coedited a book, *The Media's War against Israel* which details the media's bias against Israel. In 1983 I made a video documentary, *NBC in Lebanon: A Study of Media Misrepresentation*, which illustrates NBC's deliberate falsification of the news during the war in Lebanon in 1982. NBC served as a participant on behalf of the PLO against Israel. The two other networks were also guilty of the same practice, but not quite to the same degree as NBC.

The public has not had a chance to hear both sides of the Arab/Israel conflict. It hears the Arab side and the left-wing Israeli side, whose views are practically indistinguishable from the Arabs. But the public is rarely given a factual background of the conflict or allowed to learn the nationalist Israel viewpoint.

Yet, it *is* a question of censorship...censorship through presenting one side of an issue.

*—Peter Emanuel Goldman*
Silver Spring, MD

*Patricia Thomson replies:*

PBS has devoted hundreds of hours to the Arab-Israeli conflict over the past few years, according to a 43-page document drawn up by PBS which lists programs on Israel and the Middle East broadcast since 1986. *The MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour* alone has aired over 80 segments during this period, including interviews with Israeli Prime Ministers Yitzhak Shamir and Shimon Peres, Secretary of State George Shultz, and former President Richard Nixon—none of whom can be considered mouthpieces for the PLO or Israeli left. *Washington Week in Review*, *American Interests*, *Firing Line*, *Capital Journal*, and *World Beat* have also regularly covered the topic.

PBS has also run a long list of documentaries presenting Israeli positions, including *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in the Promised Land*; "Into the Future," the episode on Israel's creation and history in the series *Heritage: Civilization and the Jews*, plus Bill Moyers' accompanying interview with Abba Eban; *Mideast Dialogue: Highlights from Nightline in the Holy Land*, a condensed version of the *Nightline* broadcasts from Jerusalem; *Flashpoint: Israeli and the Palestinians*, a three-program package with two Israeli-produced documentaries, *Two Settlements: Etzion and Hebron* and *Peace Conflict*, and *Occupied Palestine*, in which Palestinian Arabs speak; and *Frontline*'s "Israel: The Price of Victory."



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# PUNITIVE DAMAGES: CONGRESS THREATENS CUTS IN NEA FUNDING

The National Endowment for the Arts has recently come under seige from Congress, putting the agency's future in jeopardy. The level of hostility emanating from Capitol Hill is unprecedented in the NEA's 25-year history. What began in April as a protest against one photograph by a fundamentalist religious group has snowballed into a heated national debate over censorship and the government's role in arts funding. Congress has proposed what are, in effect, punitive cuts in the NEA's budget, an outside review of its decision-making process, and provisions that prohibit use of federal funds to support art works considered "obscene or indecent." These are the words frequently used on Capitol Hill to describe the photographs at the center of this political firestorm, Andres Serrano's *Piss Christ* and a retrospective of Robert Mapplethorpe's works.

The uproar began in April when Reverend Donald Wildmon, a United Methodist Minister and executive director of the American Family Association in Tupelo, Mississippi, saw a reproduction of Serrano's 60-inch by 40-inch Cibachrome print of a plastic crucifix submerged in the artist's urine. The work was included in the catalogue for an exhibition of artists receiving grants from Awards in the Visual Arts (AVA), a program administered by the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA) in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Each year about 10 artists, selected by a jury of arts professionals, are given $15,000 by AVA, plus the exposure of a national touring exhibition and catalogue. The NEA is a partial funder of the AVA program; however, the majority of its budget comes from the Rockefeller Foundation and Equitable Foundation.

Wildmon, who gained notoriety in 1988 for leading a campaign against Martin Scorsese's film *The Last Temptation of Christ*, used similar tactics to attack AVA's funders. Proclaiming that "religious bigotry must not be supported by tax dollars," Wildmon used the organization's newsletter to launch an intensive letter-writing campaign to AVA's funders and Congress. The *New York Times* reported that Equitable received 50,000 pieces of mail, most of them preprinted postcards.

Wildmon's protest couldn't have occurred at a worse time for the NEA. The House of Representatives was in the midst of considering the agency's appropriation for 1989-90, and they were without a permanent chair, since Reagan-appointee Frank Hodsoll had departed in February for a job at the Office of Management and Budget. Picking up on Wildmon's lead, Alfonse D'Amato, Republican Senator from New York, spearheaded an assault on the NEA from within Congress. Joining him was Richard Armey, a Republican Representative from Texas who has consistently criticized the agency. On May 18, D'Amato assailed the NEA on the Senate floor and tore up the AVA catalogue. He and 35 other senators then sent a letter to NEA acting chair Hugh Southern, demanding changes in the endowment's grant-making procedures so that no money would be given to such "shocking, abhorrent and completely undeserving" art.

On June 8, the House swung into action. One hundred seven representatives signed a letter circulated by Armey asking Southern "what steps the Endowment is taking [to end support of] morally reprehensible trash." In addition to Serrano, the letter specifically mentioned the Robert Mapplethorpe exhibition organized by the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in Philadelphia and scheduled to open at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington in July. The next day, Pat Robertson devoted a telecast on his Christian Broadcast Network to the Serrano photograph, which he condemned as "blasphemy paid for by government." Robertson called upon viewers to tell their congressional representatives that tax dollars for the NEA should be "cut off entirely."

This is not the first time Armey and Robertson have coordinated an offensive against the NEA. Their modus operandi has been to draw attention to a few NEA-funded projects just as Congress turns its attention to the annual appropriations for the arts. In spring of 1985, then freshman Congressperson Armey, along with fellow Texas Representative Tom DeLay, unearthed examples of what they called pornographic poetry by past NEA fellowship recipients, including Allen Ginsberg and Anne Waldman. As a result, the House Interior Appropriations subcommittee recommended a budget freeze rather than an increase, as had been the case in previous years. Later that year at the NEA's reauthorization hearings—held periodically to scrutinize the endowments' enabling legislation—Armey and DeLay presented two videotapes as further examples of "offensive" art. Robertson then aired clips from one of the tapes, Cecelia Condit's *Possibly in Michigan*, in a CBN report criticizing federal arts funding. Representative Thomas Downey of New York, a member of the Congressional Arts Caucus, recalled the incident in a recent *New York Times* article: "This happens every two or three years. NEA or NEH endows some group or artist that members find offensive—the last flap was over pornographic poetry—and there is a routine call for a cut of endowment money. Normally, we can withstand that, and we hope we can this time as well."

Downey may have had a point, but the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., didn't think so. Not wanting to anger Congress further or endanger the NEA's appropriation—or the Corco-




**In response to Congress' proposal to bar NEA funds to "obscene or indecent" art, protests have been staged throughout the country, such as this rally outside the Metropolitan Museum in New York City on August 1.**

Photo E B Neipris

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ran's funding—director Christina Orr-Cahall announced on June 12 that the museum was cancelling the Mapplethorpe retrospective. Orr-Cahall's reason, as quoted in the *New Art Examiner*, was that the museum did not want the show to be "embroiled in a political battle over federal funding of artistic work that may offend." In later statements, she denied that the museum received any direct congressional pressure. Ironically, this attempt to preempt negative publicity and possible defunding precipitated exactly that.

The Corcoran's blatant self-censorship shocked and mobilized artists and arts adminstrators. In Washington, picketers appeared within days at the museum's doorstep, the Washington Project for the Arts began negotiations with the ICA to exhibit the Mapplethorpe show, and a group calling itself the National Committee against Censorship in the Arts was formed. Elsewhere, other arts groups sprung into action. A meeting organized by the New York-based Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts resulted in the formation of Americans for Cultural Freedom, a coalition of 45 organizations, including the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, meant to generate pressure on Congress and keep the arts community informed about developments concerning the NEA and Congress. The National Association of Artists' Organizations, representing nonprofit galleries and other alternative spaces, distributed a leaflet calling for a letter-writing and telephone campaign to urge members of the House to support the NEA. On July 11, the day before the House was to debate the issue, over 400 people attended an ad hoc meeting at Artists Space in New York City. Hans Haacke, whose art work has

## SECOND CITY FIRST IN ARTS CENSORSHIP

The righteous fervor that seems to have gripped the most vocal congressional critics of the National Endowment for the Arts in recent months was presaged, in many ways, by the past year's events in Illinois. In late May, the Illinois State Legislature passed a measure that awarded one dollar apiece to the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC) and the Illinois Arts Alliance Foundation, the nonprofit arm of a statewide arts advocacy organization. After much speculation that he might veto the bill, Governor James Thompson signed it in late July.

The reasoning behind this peculiar condition attached to the Illinois Arts Council's 1989-90 $11.8-million appropriation was that both organizations deserved censure for their support of an art work that incorporated an American flag. SAIC exhibited—and the Arts Alliance publicly defended their right to exhibit—a piece by SAIC student Scott Tyler entitled *What is the proper way to display the American flag?* As part of the work, viewers were invited to record their responses to this question, but, in order to write in the book supplied for that purpose, they had to step on a flag lying on the floor in front of it. Hundreds of military veterans demonstrated to protest what they considered desecration of the flag; among those demonstrators was State Senator Walter Dudycz, a Chicago Republican and Vietnam War veteran. And it was Dudycz who drafted and introduced the one dollar appropriation—invented as a legal barrier to subsequent funding for either organization during the next fiscal year—because, as he told the *Chicago Tribune*, "There was a crime committed. Do they think they have the right to taxpayers' dollars? The taxpayers don't think so." In an article on the controversy in the *New York Times*, the school's president, Tony Jones, challenged Dudycz' position, "Is the legislature going to punish anyone who doesn't adhere to community standards of art as determined by politicians?"

Ironically, the punishment meted out by the Illinois legislature only indirectly affects the target of its displeasure. Arts Council funds are not used to underwrite gallery exhibitions, but instead contribute to SAIC's major public programs: the Film Center, the Video Data Bank, a visiting artists program, and a professional development program for public school art teachers. Last year the school received $64,700 from the Arts Council; $29,000 of that went to the Film Center and $18,000 to the Data Bank.

Asked about her plans for next year in light of the legislature's action, Film Center director Barbara Scharres pointed out that efforts to replace the funds from other sources are being explored. Some optimism on this front resulted from a press release issued by the governor's office when he signed the appropriations bill. That document hints at the possibility that the governor's discretionary funds might be used to undo the legislature's damage. However, Scharres remarked, "None of us know what, if anything, this means," since the statement to this effect was only attributed to an anonymous aide. Meanwhile, SAIC's development department has approached private foundations. If these efforts fail, Scharres said that the Film Center will face some difficult decisions. "The last thing you want to have suffer is the public program," Scharres observed. "If we don't cut the program, what will suffer are those things that get people to our programs—advertising and other forms of publicity, lecturers, and artists brought in to speak about their work."

Expressing similar sentiments, Video Data Bank assistant director Mindy Faber noted, "We're not going to be wiped off the face of the planet.

made him a target of censorship in the past, pinpointed two key constitutional issues at stake: free speech and the separation of church and state. "Tax dollars should not be used by politicians to promote the religious beliefs of any religious groups. I'd consider it a constitutional affront if my tax dollars are used to promote religious beliefs," Haacke told the meeting. Letters signed by those present were hand-delivered to congressional offices the next day. Pro-NEA activities were also organized in Baltimore, Atlanta, Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco, Houston, San Antonio, Seattle, and San Diego.

But given the shrill and unrelenting outcry from conservatives in Congress, longtime arts supporter Sidney Yates, chair of the House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee which is responsible for NEA appropriations, was compelled

But we planned to produce a catalogue next year, and its production may have to be scaled down or slowed down. The problem is that's the mainstay of our promotion efforts. We will probably have to cancel a planned screening series that was a component of our Arts Council application." Over the summer, the Data Bank, the Film Center, and the other SAIC programs affected by the funding cuts were reviewed by Arts Council peer panels, and all were given the highest ratings by the panelists. The appropriations act, of course, prevented the Arts Council from awarding the school any grants.

The fallout from the angry opposition to Tyler's piece and a similar outcry the previous year over the display at SAIC of a student's painting of late Chicago Mayor Harold Washington in women's underwear has not been limited to economic penalties. This summer the SAIC trustees issued guidelines for exhibitions that permit school administrators to "relocate or remove" art works that violate the law or are "hazardous to the health and or safety of viewers or participants." The new rules also allow the school to remove or relocate work that "may be disruptive to the educational process." Despite the severity of these guidelines, in early October the Data Bank will screen a program of videotapes dealing with sexuality and repressive social structures—John Greyson's *The Kipling Trilogy*, Tom Kalin's *They Are Lost to Vision Altogether*, George Kuchar's *Evangelust*, and Julie Zando's *The A Ha! Experience*—in one of the SAIC galleries. Faber firmly stated that they have no intention of imposing self-censorship.

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to take action. Initially Yates proposed an amendment prohibiting subgranting—the mechanism by which Serrano was awarded $15,000. Such a measure, it was hoped, would divert congressional attention from content to the mechanics of arts funding. But after intense lobbying by arts organizations combined with Southern and National Endowment for the Humanities chair Lynne Cheney's argument that subgranting should be maintained, Yates proposed a compromise: subsidiary groups could still recommend grants, but final decisions would have to be made by the endowments.

By the time Yates' bill reached the House floor, however, it was clear that several representatives meant to deliver a mortal blow to the Endowment. California Republican Dana Rohrabacher proposed an amendment to cut the Endowment's funds altogether. "The taxpayers shouldn't have to pay for whatever outrage or trash an artist dreams up. Artists can do whatever they want with their own time and with their own dime," Rohrabacher told his colleagues. An amendment offered by Armey was only slightly less venomous. Calling the agency "intransigent" and in need of a "severe slap on the wrist for...[having] severely defaulted on its responsibility to the American people," he proposed a 10 percent cut in the NEA budget. By the time conservative Texas Democrat Charles Stenholm introduced an amendment to cut the NEA by $45,000—equal to the sum of the support for Serrano's fellowship and the Mapplethorpe exhibition—his measure seemed relatively moderate and was passed by the House. Such direct punitive action is unprecedented in Congress' relation to the endowment. But worse was yet to come.

Senate action followed two weeks later and its severity surprised many observers. On July 25 the Senate Appropriations Committee approved several measures without debate. First, it barred the ICA and SECCA from seeking NEA funding for five years—another unprecedented move. Never before has Congress tried to impose prohibitions on what the NEA funds or singled out specific grantees. Second, the committee required an outside review of the endowment's grant-making procedures, setting aside $100,000 for this study.

The following day, the Senate went even further. In a voice vote on the floor of a nearly deserted Senate, less than a dozen lawmakers approved an amendment offered by South Carolina Republican Jesse Helms that would ban federal arts funds from being used to "promote, disseminate, or produce obscene or indecent materials, including but not limited to depictions of sadomasochism, homoeroticism, the exploitation of children, or individuals engaged in sex acts; or material which denigrates the objects or beliefs of the adherents of a particular religion or nonreligion." The amendment also prohibits grants for art work that "denigrates, debases, or reviles a person, group or class of citizens on the basis of race, creed, sex, handicap, age or national origin."

Helms' amendment is so broad that its consti-

tutionality is questionable. Many arts advocates and Congressional observers expect it to be dropped when the House and Senate committees meet in conference to reconcile their different bills. The compromise legislation adopted by the conference committee will then return to both houses for debate, giving politicians yet another shot at the NEA. According to arts lobbyist Dean Amhaus of Duncan and Associates, Helms will probably force a vote on the Senate floor to create a record of where members stand on the issue. As he did in July, Helms is likely to frame the issue in a way that will make his fellow senators squirm: "If Senators want the Federal government funding pornography, sadomasochism, or art for pedophiles, they should vote against my amendment."

The congressional debate this summer offers a disturbing preview of what could happen when the NEA's reauthorization legislation is drafted this fall. This is a critical phase for the NEA. Every agency exists by virtue of the authorizing legislation that created it. The congressional committee in charge of reauthorizing a given agency sets a monetary ceiling that cannot be exceeded during the authorization period, which in the case of the NEA is five years. On an annual basis, the appropriations committee then recommends a budget. The reauthorization committee can also rewrite the enabling legislation—a power that appropriations committees do not have, as they were constantly reminded by pro-NEA legislators during this summer's floor debates. Thus, the philosophy underlying the NEA's funding structures is also grist for the reauthorization mill.

During reauthorization hearings, the NEA's time-honored peer panel review process, which has come under attack for an alleged lack of accountability, is likely to be scrutinized. Under less adversarial conditions, the endowment chaired by Hodsoll began overturning panel-approved grants. Hodsoll first broke precedent in 1982 by vetoing four grants himself. In subsequent years the National Council on the Arts, the NEA's governing body, overturned panel recommendations to support several projects, including *De Peliculas*, a film by DeeDee Halleck and Pennee Bender documenting the history of U.S. intervention in Central America. News of subsequent vetoes became increasingly difficult to obtain, as the NEA's top management forbade staff to talk to the press.

Until Hodsoll effectively politicized the grant-making process at the NEA, the most compelling defense against government interference was the professionalism of the peer panels, which provided a buffer against outside political pressure and the chair's personal tastes. This is the argument that Southern made in response to congressional criticism, but it no longer seems to carry much weight. As Congress prepares for the NEA's reauthorization hearings, arts activists are busy, too. Amhaus summed it up: "It's an on-going issue. It's not going to go away, no matter what."

LUCINDA FURLONG

## FCC AND NEA CHAIRS FILLED

In a break from the Reagan years, President Bush's recent appointments to two federal chairmanships, at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), are considered noteworthy—more for their pragmatism than ideology.

This summer, Oregon lawyer John E. Frohnmayer, 47, was tapped to chair the NEA. He replaces fellow moderate conservative Frank Hodsoll, who left the endowment early this year to take a post at the Office of Management and Budget. Frohnmayer has a long track record with Oregon arts groups, serving as chair of the state's arts commission from 1980 to 1984 and providing pro bono legal counsel to local artists. A former board member of the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA), Frohnmayer is considered a strong advocate of the arts and was supported by several national arts groups, including NASAA and the Washington-based American Arts Alliance. However, Frohnmayer was careful not to take a position on the Robert Mapplethorpe/Andres Serrano controversy that erupted several weeks before his appointment was announced (see Lucinda Furlong's article above).

On August 4, three new appointees to the five-member FCC were confirmed, after an intensive grilling from the Senate Commerce Committee concerning their views on industry regulation. The new commission chair will be Alfred Sikes, a 49-year-old former radio broadcaster and director of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), the executive agency responsible for formulating telecommunications policy. He replaces current FCC chair Dennis Patrick who, along with his predecessor Mark Fowler, rankled Congress with their strident support for deregulation.

Sikes, a critic of the fairness doctrine, is known as an industry insider and team player who is likely to seek a thaw in relations with legislators, which became strained during Patrick's term. According to the cable trade paper *Multichannel News*, Sikes led the NTIA in a comprehensive review of communications policy during his tenure, focussing on U.S. competitiveness in global markets, new approaches to cable television relationships, improving AM radio broadcasting, and reform in telephone company price regulation. As director of the agency Sikes was point man for the Reagan and Bush Administrations' attempts to eliminate the NTIA-administered Public Telecommunications Facilities Program, but his five-year appointment was praised by some prominent people in the public broadcasting sector, including David Brugger, president of the National Association of Public Television Stations and National Public Radio head Douglas Bennet Jr. Both commended Sikes for his advocacy of public broadcasting.

Joining Sikes on the commission will be Republicans Andrew Barrett and Sherrie Marshall.


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Barrett has been an Illinois state commissioner since 1980 and serves on a rural utility communications commission. Marshall formerly worked in the FCC under Patrick and later, as a White House staffer, lobbied for John Towers' unsuccessful bid for Secretary of Defense. She and Barrett have close ties to the architects of deregulation, Patrick and Fowler. The two, along with Sikes, were heavily interrogated by Senate Commerce Committee members, who questioned their levels of commitment to dealing with violence and indecency in broadcasting. Barrett in particular raised concern during the hearings when he stated, "It seems to me that what we perceive to be indecent is not on television because there is no market. There is a market for indecency out there, and I think we ought to keep in mind that there is an America out there, otherwise they would not be showing it."

This issue has created some strange new alliances. Criticisms raised by Democratic committee members over indecency and violence on television were echoed by the religious right. Representatives from the American Family Association, Religious Roundtable, and other groups also voiced their disenchantment with the Bush administration and its deregulation policies and challenged the three appointees on the issue.

RENEE TAJIMA

## KIDS' STUFF

Producers and users of children's programs now have a quick and easy way of interconnecting, thanks to a computer database provided by the nonprofit organization Kidsnet. The six-year-old Washington, D.C.-based service was founded to act as a "liaison between the education and broadcast communities." Their subscription database includes information on 20,000 audio and video programs appropriate for preschoolers through high school students. It is organized into 160 curriculum areas, running the gamut from child care to government studies to Native American studies. "You name it, we have it," says Susan Groubman, Kidnet's research manager. Although the database's list is dominated by titles from such major program producers as HBO, Nickelodeon, and Showtime, there are also independent projects, especially in the areas of documentary and animation. Kidsnet office manager Susan Madsen says they are "not actively looking for material at this time, but independent producers may send in a press release or flyer about their title for consideration."

In addition to the database, Kidsnet produces related print materials, such as study guides, calendars, and a monthly bulletin. Last year, Kidsnet published a newsletter for Black History month and produced several programs for minorities. Says executive director Karen Jaffe, "We are always interested in minority program enhancement."

The organization, currently utilized by educators in 30 states, France, and Australia, is seeking to expand the database's subscriber base beyond the regular educational market. "Right now, many children—long-term hospital patients for instance—are watching soap operas all day," says Jaffe. "That is really a tragic situation. We want to expand our services to parents, hospitals, and libraries."

For more information, contact: Kidsnet, Box 65089, Washington, D.C., 20035; (202) 291-1400.

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## JORIS IVENS: 1898-1989

A founding parent of political documentary and a guiding spirit in independent film for over six decades, Joris Ivens died of a heart attack in Paris on June 28. He was 90. Holland's leading filmmaker created his first work at age 13. His career progressed in tandem with the development of film as a basic component of popular culture. His last film, *The Wind*, one of his many documentaries on China, was completed last year.

Ivens became a film activist in the late twenties, as a mainstay of the Amsterdam Filmliga (film league), which screened experimental foreign films. Many of the works were banned from Dutch theaters, but generated both an enthusiastic audience and a number of artistically and politically provocative films. Among these were Ivens' early, formalist works, most notably *The Bridge*, *Breakers*, and *Rain*, which brought him international acclaim. But earlier experiences as a factory worker in Germany propelled him toward more overtly political themes, reflecting his sympathies with labor and the Communist left.

His work impressed Soviet director V. I. Pudovkin, who invited Ivens to visit the Soviet Union on behalf of the Union of Film Directors. Ivens' first visit there in 1930 further solidified his political stance. In response to criticism from Soviet audiences, he resolved to incorporate depictions of human physical labor and working conditions into his documentary studies.

Upon his return to Holland, he was hired to make an industrial film for the Philips Radio company. The success of *Philips-Radio* and the subsequent *Creosote* put Ivens in a position to return to Moscow and work in a setting more suited to his political and artistic temperment, the young Soviet film industry. Here he developed his position in the ongoing debate in the film world over the limits of documentary and its distinctions from fiction film. He argued against the Dziga Vertov school of pure documentary, which opposed the use of staging or subjective narration. Ivens favored allowing for staged reenactments of events as a means of broadening the documentary form through "maximum expressiveness."

Ivens' next project, *Borinage*, documented the aftermath of a bitter miners' strike in Belgium, 1932. Ivens wrote in his autobiography, *The Camera and I*, "The urgency in which this film was made kept our camera angles severe and



**Joris Ivens, in a 1978 photograph**

Photo: Robert Del Tredici

orthodox. Or one might say, unorthodox, because super-slickness and photographic affectation were becoming the orthodoxy of the European documentary film. This return to simplicity was actually a stylistic revolution for me. It was right because I felt it necessary to resist communicating personal pity for these people—what had to be stressed was the harshness of their situation without being sentimental or pitying. Every sequence should say I ACCUSE—accusing the social system which caused such misery and hardship.... We felt it would be insulting to people in such extreme hardship to use any style of photography that would prevent the direct, honest communication of their pain to the spectator."

Ivens' approach was shared by the U.S. film group Nykino, and his presence in the U.S. in the mid-thirties influenced Leo Hurwitz, Pare Lorentz, Paul Strand, and many other New Deal era documentarians. His contact with the U.S. film and literary scenes laid the groundwork for the production of Ivens' most memorable films: *The Spanish Earth*, *The 400 Million*, and *The Power and the Land*, the latter produced by the Department of Agriculture to encourage farmers to participate in Roosevelt's rural electrification program.

*The Spanish Earth*, written and narrated by Ernest Hemingway and shot in the thick of the Spanish Civil War, and *The 400 Million*, shot by John Ferno and Robert Capa during the 1937 Japanese invasion of China, were outstanding examples of wartime documentary. Produced in the midst of soldiers on the battlefield and resistant civilians facing bombing attacks and torture, Ivens' films contributed to the growing anti-fascist mood which became near universal with the U.S. entry into World War II. During the war Ivens was based in this country, where he worked with the War Department's propaganda unit under


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the command of Frank Capra. He returned to Europe in 1945. In the early fifties he came under attack from Senator Joseph McCarthy's anti-communist witchhunt; he never returned to the U.S.

At the invitation of the Netherlands government, Ivens returned to become Film Commissioner for Indonesia. He was thus drafted to document the planned "liberation" of that country by Dutch and English forces. However, in August 1945, before this feat could be accomplished, an independent government was established under Achmed Sukarno. The Dutch forces moved to head off this unsupervised break from colonialism, and Ivens' crew was suddenly excluded from the expedition. Organized seamen of Java, Australia, and India sabotaged the Dutch incursion. Ivens resigned his post, and produced the documentary *Indonesia Calling* under the sponsorship of the Waterfront Unions of Australia.

For the rest of his life, Ivens was a prolific international documentarian. Based in Prague, he contributed to renewed postwar film production in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Poland. In 1957 he resettled in Paris, but the focus of his work shifted to the Third World: Mali, Cuba, Chile, Laos, Vietnam, and in particular China, where he produced several documentaries, including the 12-hour series *How Yukong Moved the Mountains*.

About his life's work, Ivens wrote: "I continue to make documentary films because I know there is unity between what I believe and what I do. If I felt I had lost that unity, I would change my profession. A documentary filmmaker has the sense of participating directly in the world's most fundamental issues—a sense that is difficult for even the most conscious filmmaker working in a studio to feel."

Ivens is survived by his wife and collaborator of 20 years, Marceline Loridan.

ETHAN YOUNG

## SEQUELS

While the **Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities** survived the attempt earlier this year to defund it entirely, the year ahead looks grim ["To Halve or Halve Not: Massachusetts Cuts Arts Funding," May 1989]. For fiscal year 1989/90 a House-Senate conference committee settled on $12.4-million for the council—down from $19.5-million in 1988 and $21.7-million the preceding year. Factoring in certain funding requirements, this means a 45 percent cut in funding for programs. The largest ear-marked allocation—$1.2-million—goes to the Massachusetts Corporation for Educational Telecommunications, which has set up a satellite television network linking schools, social services agencies, and so on. The network, not coincidentally, broadcasts proceedings of the state legislature. The day before the new budget was announced, council executive director Anne Hawley announced her resignation, effective September, to assume the

directorship of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston. Her replacement will have the tough job of slashing long-standing programs in half.

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Public television's plans to broadcast ***Days of Rage,*** a documentary on the Palestinian *intifada*, continues to stir up controversy ["Promises, Promises: Programs on the Palestinian Intifada Accused of Bias," July 1989]. The presenting station, WNET, reports it has received nearly 2,500 letters, almost three-quarters in protest of the show. While it will be aired on September 6, two mini-documentaries prepared by WNET will wrap around the 90-minute show, with one focusing on Israelis' views on their presence in the occupied territories and another on the human rights questions raised by *Days of Rage*. Reporters at the National Consumer Press Tour in July wouldn't let the matter rest, using the occasion to grill PBS representatives over the program's packaging, suggesting PBS had "caved in" to pressure. When the ever-ready "balance" argument was levied in defense, critics pointed out that the show, if so "subjective," could have been scheduled on *P.O.V.* PBS vice president Barry Chase said that they had considered this. When pressed, he also acknowledged the inconsistencies in PBS' use of wrap-arounds, saying that ultimately it was a judgement call.

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***South Africa Now,*** the two-year old TV news magazine, has made the leap to national satellite ["Independent Company Televises the News from South Africa," October 1988]. As of August 3, the weekly show is being distributed by the Interregional Programming Service via PBS' satellite. About 50 of the country's 334 public TV stations are running the program in their regular lineup. *South Africa Now*'s producer, Globalvision, is trying to generate a grassroots campaign to increase that number even further, through phone calls and pressure to local stations.

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The *New York Daily News* called him "Ingrate of the Year." Randall Adams, the man who was serving a life sentence for a murder he didn't commit, filed suit against Errol Morris, whose film ***The Thin Blue Line*** was largely responsible for Adams' release from prison ["The Wrong Man: *The Thin Blue Line* and Justice in Dallas," June 1989]. The dispute centered around an option to Adams' life story, which Morris purchased in December 1986. The lawsuit's catalyst, presumably, were the offers that started rolling in from television production companies and film studios. Because the original contract did not stipulate a time limit on the story rights, these offers had to go to Morris, not Adams. Now, as a result of a mid-August out of court settlement, Adams gets to act as his own agent, while Morris retains the rights pertaining to *The Thin Blue Line*.

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Conceding defeat weeks before their scheduled day in court, the Kansas City Council voted to restore the city's public access channel, which had been eliminated in the council's effort to keep the **Ku Klux Klan's cable series,** *Race and Reason*, off the air ["Showdown in Kansas City: KKK vs American Cablevision," August/September 1988]. The council's decision came on the heels on the Supreme Court ruling on flag-burning, which they felt would undermine their defense, and was influenced by the potential costs of a losing court battle. The American Civil Liberties Union, which was to represent the Klan in their suit against the city, and the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers have both vowed to assist community groups to develop counter-programming to *Race and Reason*, should it return to the channel.

Fear of racist programming from the Klan and other supremecist groups has led the City Council in St. Petersburg, Florida, to reject community demands for a public access channel. While city officials and Paragon Cable agreed that the cable company would provide 10-hours a day of community programming, this agreement was not written into the recently renewed franchise contract. Their lawyers were concerned that the community channel might be construed as an access channel, which would deprive Paragon of editorial control.

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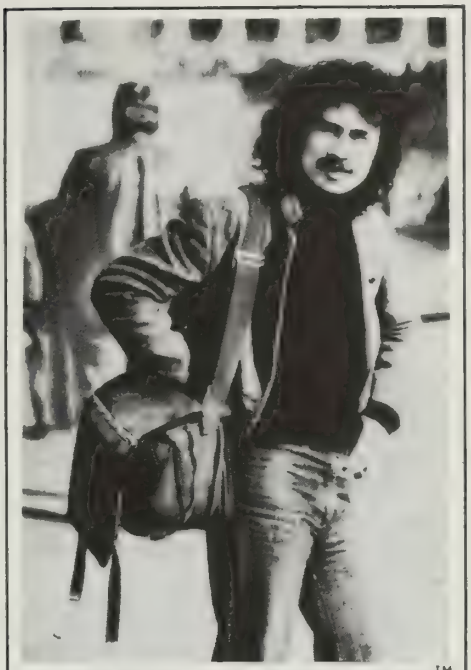
The U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities have joined forces in calling for the **reregulation of the cable industry** ["Cable Feels the Heat," June 1988]. In late July, both came out with statements in support of bills S. 1068 and H.R. 2437, sponsored by Senator Al Gore and Representative Rick Boucher respectively, which would return the power to set rates to the cities, among other measures. Contributing to the case for reregulation was the General Accounting Office's long-awaited report on rate increases. This showed an increase during the past two-years of 29 percent in basic cable rates and 14 percent in subscribers' average bills—both considered fair. However, Congress did note some "worrisome statistics" that showed 17.6 percent of subscribers incurring a 50 percent or greater rate increase and more than 25 percent incurring a 40 percent increase. But much more damaging to the industry was the GAO spokeman's comment to the House telecommunications subcommittee: "With no competition and limited regulation, I believe we have a monopoly." This was the red flag Congress seemed to be waiting for.


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# IPS OPEN MIC: AIVF MEMBERS IN N.Y.C...

Patricia Thomson

On the evening of August 3 about 75 members of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF) gathered in an auditorium at New York University to attend a meeting on the Independent Production Service (IPS)*—two months before its October 1 launch. IPS was established by Congress in the Public Telecommunications Act of 1988, which set this start-up date. Many of the producers in attendance were still unsure about what the IPS is supposed to be and how it will functio, and came to the meeting to find out. The panelists, in turn, were on their own information-gathering quest. As AIVF executive director Lawrence Sapadin said in his introductory comments, the purpose of the meeting—conducted largely as an open-mic discussion—was "to create a record" of independents' views on how IPS should work and what its priorities should be. This will then be presented to the IPS board of directors to help them shape policy. Similar meetings were held in San Francisco and Los Angeles [see Janice Drickey's article below and "Setting the Stage for Public TV's Independent Program Service," April 1989].

The main topics for the evening—the kind of programming that IPS should fund, the grant-making process, and eligibility—remain open questions pending the formation of the IPS board of directors, who will determine the service's precise mode of operation. At the time of the New York and California meetings, board selection was still in progress. A slate of prospective board members had been drawn up by a committee of the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers, but required approval by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. The Coalition's list was distilled from more than 300 individuals nominated in response to a mailing last spring to AIVF members, public television stations, and the mailing lists of CPB, the Coalition, and several media arts centers. According to the joint Coalition/CPB memo soliciting nominees, the board will reflect: "(1) racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, regional and artistic diversity; (2) diversity of television genres; and (3) compliance with the congressional recommendation that an appropriate number of personnel from public television stations will serve on the advisory council and governing board of the service." As this issue goes to press, it appears likely that a board will be in place and incorporating papers filed by the October 1 deadline, unless CPB rejects the Coalition's recommendations.

The AIVF public meeting was divided into four half-hour discussions, led by David Shulman, Robert Spencer, Pamela Yates, and Ralph Arlyck—all members of AIVF's Advocacy Committee. Each segment focused on an area the new board will immediately have to tackle, with the last half hour alloted to general discussion. Shulman opened the evening by posing several questions: Should IPS emphasize series or stand-alone programs? Should it rely on submitted proposals or requests for proposals on specific issues? Should it award larger grants to fewer people or vice versa? Just how big are "big" or "small" grants? The discussion on the grant-making process revolved around such questions as whether to use professional staff, perhaps along the lines of the commissioning editors at Britain's Channel Four, or design a system of peer panel review along the lines of the current National Endowment for the Arts practice? If peer panels are used, should they be regional or centralized? Should they have the final say over what projects get funded? Should IPS consider funding acquisitions or only new productions? The discussion on eligibility raised the inevitable question of defining an "independent producer."

As people in the audience took their turns at the microphone, it became clear that opinions on each of these topics varied widely. Perhaps the only shared sentiment was a common craving for a funding service free of the red tape and prolonged review process that plague other funders. The group also tended to favor cutting IPS' pie into smaller pieces to serve more people and viewed series with some skepticism, regarding them as gobbling up too much of the limited production funds.

Otherwise, diversity reigned. There were those who advocated greater support of political documentaries and those who favored experimental work, imported programs, or production funds and training for inner-city high school students. Some spoke up for smaller, more flexible program "clusters" instead of full-scale series. Smaller development grants to help producers prepare effective development packages were also suggested, as were grants based on a percentage of the producer's budget, rather than flat amounts. A number were in favor of an ongoing submission and review process, rather than biannual or quarterly reviews, which could better accommodate producers needing to move quickly in response to current events.

The anxiety level in the room soared when it became clear that IPS-funded programs will not be guaranteed airtime. Asked by documentarian Jacki Ochs if public television is under any kind of "moral obligation" to air the programs, Sapadin explained, "Technically, there's no obligation. On the other hand, if the programs are good and the system doesn't carry them, it will not help CPB get money from Congress, and it won't help the stations. There will be something self-defeating about their not using the programs." The audience was still restive. "This is an extremely important point!" responded Washington, D.C., producer Robert Gardner, with cries of "critical!" coming from the audience. During the rest of the evening, the issue of carriage returned repeatedly, with various producers proposing that the IPS set its sights on securing a regular slot in PBS's core schedule. Sapadin assured the group that a priority of the IPS will be to develop positive station relations and to obtain maximum appropriate carriage for whatever work the IPS funds. Although this remains a serious challenge, part of IPS' acknowledged mandate extends beyond merely serving as a funder to also help package and promote independent productions in ways that will enhance their chances for broadcast. The Coalition successfully lobbied Congress for a provision that requires CPB to provide IPS with additional funding to this end.

Another tangled thread running through the evening's discussion was the dispute surrounding the quality of IPS-funded productions. For Ochs, "The operative words are 'risk,' 'nonmainstream,' 'failure.' You have to be willing to take risks on films that will fail." Gardner was among those who saw things differently, favoring those with a professional track record and proven "creative accountibility." "You should take people with experience...because a failure of IPS is going to be very hard on all independent producers.... There are plenty of people in PBS who'd love to see [IPS] fall right on its face." Gardner's position was countered by Peter Nelson, who responded that it wasn't fair to discriminate against those with only one or two films. "These people need a chance. Cream rises to the top, and if they don't make it, they don't make it." Jack Walz added, "I think it's a phoney issue, the number of films done. Most people here have done a few films and are trying to do a few more." Advocacy commit-

* While IPS is the acrynom used in the 1988 legislation, the name will be changed in the incorporating papers in order to avoid confusion with an existing regional program service, the Interregional Program Service (IPS).

tee member Ralph Arlyck later returned to the theme: "I agree with Bob Gardner that the stations are tough. It's going to be hard to get this stuff on the air. But we have to be careful not to allow the existing system to define what it is we're trying to do." This drew a hearty applause and chorus of "yeahs."

Arlyck, who was also involved in the 1978 lobbying of Congress by AIVF to guarantee a portion of CPB funds for independents, continued, "There's something we lose sight of when we're talking about how we're going to carve this baby up. This is an astounding victory. It's really unprecedented. What we need to do... is think, how are we going to protect it? How are we going to prevent it from becoming one of those bloated organizations?" In the long term, Arlyck continued, "we want to make it bigger, but also keep it simple. I'm against series. I'm against RFPs. I'm against ascertainments. I'm against production entities. And I'm certainly against 'quality.'" Another round of applause. "I'm being facetious, of course," he continued. "But we don't need ideas; you all have five ideas for films or videos. We need an equitable, efficient mechanism to get this stuff funded." Ochs wound up the two-hour meeting by positioning IPS within an even broader context, making reference to current right-wing pressure to censor and defund NEA-supported projects. "It seems IPS is the result of a political struggle that goes on.... It's important that political and artistic ideas that are extreme get funded. It's all the same struggle."


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## ...AND FEATURE FILMMAKERS IN L.A.

### Janice Drickey

"How do we define and sustain filmmaking which is outside the mainstream, which may even be opposed, or unpleasant, or hostile to the mainstream?" was the challenge articulated by British filmmaker and critic Peter Wollen at a panel in Los Angeles convened by the Independent Feature Project/West (IFP/West) and the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers to discuss the structure of public television's new Independent Production Service (IPS). Like his fellow panelists, who spoke about developments in Great Britain, Germany, and Italy, Wollen stressed the importance of creating an alternative film culture over the need to fund individual alternative films.

The June 20 program, provocatively titled "Before the Revolution: A Town Meeting to Discuss the Future of Public Funding for Independent Feature Films," invited debate on how the IPS should allocate the $18-million dollars in the IPS budget, which is earmarked for independent film and video production over the next three years. Questions about funding, accessibility, and


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structure of the service were fielded by moderator Peter Broderick, an independent producer and board member of IFP/West, and Larry Daressa, chair of the National Coalition, at the event, held in the cavernous Grand Atrium of the Filmland Center in Culver City. Drawing on the examples of Britain's Channel Four, the German TV station ZDF's *Das kleine Fernsehspiel* program, and Italy's three-channel RAI, panelists described ways in which television funds in each country stimulated new waves of feature filmmaking. Wollen, who was involved in the formation of Channel Four in England, spoke about the need for a diverse, "across-the-board" movement, utilizing not just producers and directors but exhibitors and distributors, as well as critics, writers, and teachers. He encouraged contact between different kinds of alternative and nonmainstream filmmakers. Without that kind of interaction, Wollen cautioned, "you begin to fragment, you begin to lose any sense of a common purpose or direction."

Marc Silberman, a professor of German language and film at the University of Wisconsin who has published widely on the New German Cinema, described the cofunding system between the state-run television system and independent producers that flourished in Germany during the 1970s and the doors this opened for various cultural groups. "German women filmmakers gained their entrance to the cinema through the television," Silberman began. "Gays, both female and male, were able to produce their first feature usually through television cofunding. The left finally had a national public through television funding, and the ecology movement in the eighties, the anti-nuke movement, they've also been able to find a place in television sponsorship and cofunding," he concluded.

A parallel was drawn between Italy's Neo-Realist movement and the aims of the IPS by Steve Ricci, manager of the University of California, Los Angeles Film and Television Archive Research and Study Center. "Italian filmmakers at the end of World War II were arguing against a style of filmmaking which associated itself very, very much with classical Hollywood cinema," Ricci observed, adding that the Neo-Realists were "attempt[ing] to show a kind of cinema that could not be seen otherwise."

In discussion groups where they explored "nuts and bolts" questions about the new service, the independent feature filmmakers present recognized a common desire to create and show works that stimulate ideas, that question and surprise, that play with traditional notions of format and narrative, and reflect a wide range of cultural, regional, and ethnic backgrounds. Summing up the challenge for the filmmakers and the newly-selected IPS board of directors, Daressa observed, "It's time to take our imaginations out of the closet."

*Janice Drickey is a freelance writer who covers the film and television industry in Los Angeles.*

## FOR THE RECORD

After hearing about the cooperative wedding of independent filmmakers and European television, participants in the June 20 town meeting in Los Angeles broke into discussion groups where they voiced their own innovative (and occasionally humorous) ideas about what the IPS should—and should not—be:

- The first answer that came up in terms of what film they would like to see get made was "*mine*!"
- Money should be spent on fundraising so that there would be a larger budget to do all of this stuff and on good old-fashioned public relations to be sure these things find a home.
- Having small focus groups which revolve fairly frequently would be a way of making sure that all kinds of different, diverse filmmaking and videomaking communities were represented.
- Although one criteria of these films is that they be low-budget, it is important not to force people to work with injuriously low budgets where they are overworked for little money or aren't paid.
- Certain films perhaps might not physically, technically look as "good" as PBS, which has a habit of saying, "This film does not meet our critical standards, our technical standards in putting that on a television set." That should never, never, never be an IPS criterion.
- The money should not be in pre-set increments but should be determined on a per-project basis.
- Provide marketing assistance for films that have already been made, not under the auspices of the IPS, that would fit the criteria of the IPS.... Sort of adopt these projects.
- The marketing methods should be adequate to promote what is a harder sell and a more controversial type of project.
- There should be different pots for completing a project versus initiating a project.
- It is very necessary to find ways to create or develop new broadcast potential, not just PBS.
- Spread the money around as widely as possible so that small, interesting things could be made, as opposed to large, stupid things.
- The people being selected should be absolutely as diverse a group as possible. Rather than have a large group deciding things so that everybody's diverse opinion cancels out everybody else's strong opinion, some mechanism should be implemented so that the projects that people feel most strongly about are the ones that get made, as opposed to the ones that everybody merely can agree upon.
- Should the IPS commission work? Our concern is that commissioning work leads to projects that are conservative and content-oriented.
- There is a real strong feeling that coproduction, for all the evils that it represents, would be necessary to get certain projects done.
- Minorities should be represented as regional and cultural, not just racial.
- This program is only as good as the panel and the makeup of the panel is the single most important thing that should be addressed. In addition to the obvious places that one might look for panelists, one should look in organizations representing communities, minorities, and the arts. Women should be represented, and curators of arts institutions and critics should be included as well.

JD

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# WHAT THE MANUAL DIDN'T TELL YOU: TIME CODE AND COMPUTER EDITING

Rick Feist

This article is second in a series, written by staff members of the Standby Program, a nonprofit video access and education program dedicated to providing artists and independent producers with sophisticated video services they can afford. Standby's technicians are artists themselves and therefore offer vital understanding and sympathetic collaboration. Since 1983, works made possible by Standby have been broadcast on the Public Broadcasting Service, as well as European and Japanese television, and have been exhibited in museums and galleries worldwide. The information presented here and in future articles should help you make appropriate technical decisions to suit your aesthetic and budgetary needs.

□ □ □

The use of computers for video editing depends on **time code**. Time code is also known as **SMPTE (simp-tee)**, named after the organization that developed it, the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers. Broadcast VTRs record this code on a separate time code track.

**The SMPTE (Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers) standard is an 80 bit binary code, synchronized to start at the beginning of each video frame (see diagram below). Time code uses binary coded decimals to store numeric values.**

**Inset: The time code recorded is displayed as a number composed of hours:minutes:seconds:frame. The number here is that represented in the graph.**

Since time code is recorded on videotape, each frame is assigned the next highest number. There are 30 frames per second, 60 seconds per minute, 60 minutes per hour, and 24 hours. When the frame count reaches :29, the next frame is numbered :00, and the second count increases by an increment of one. After 59 seconds, the minute count likewise increases. And so do the hours after 59 minutes. The frame after 23:59:59:29 reverts to 00:00:00:00.

## To Drop or Not to Drop

There are two modes of time code for NTSC video. **Non-drop frame time code** is based on a pure numerical system of 30 frames per second. Straightfoward arithmetic will calculate durations and offsets. Because color video runs slightly slower than 30 frames per second (29.97 fps), the non-drop frame time code drifts from the measurement of true time.

**Drop-frame time code** corrects the drift, much as leap year functions for the (Gregorian) calendar. Drop-frame time code leaves out two frames per minute (except every tenth minute) and corresponds more exactly to the real time elapsed. For instance, the next time code number after 01:01:59:29 would be 01:02:00:02.

Drop-frame time code is used for TV programs where the length of a show must fit an exact broadcast time slot. Non-drop frame time code allows calculations of edit points and durations to be added or subtracted directly. Therefore, non-drop code is more convenient to use.

Consistency is better still, i.e., the code on all tapes used to compile an edited tape should be of one kind, drop or non-drop. Though editing computers adjust for mixed code, quirks will plague the cumbersome manipulation of numbers. The entry of time code numbers must wait until the tape is loaded on a VTR, and the computer has determined whether the time code on the tape is drop or non-drop. Generally, work with non-drop frame code.

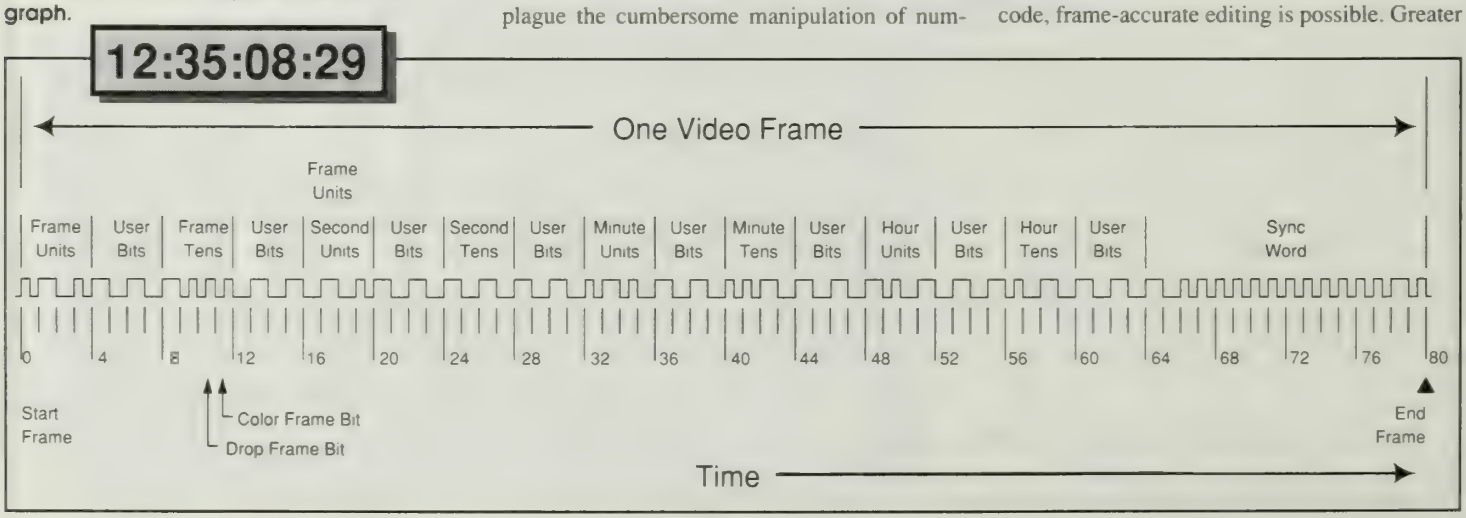
There are also two ways to record the time code. Longitudinal time code is almost universal. It is recorded like an audio signal on a time code track. This form of code cannot be read by a VTR running in stop, pause, or at very slow speed modes; the videotape must be moving before time code becomes decipherable.

Vertical interval time code (VITC) reads even in the stop or pause modes, since time code is recorded with the video on several lines of vertical blanking before the start of a frame. Yet VITC cannot be recorded after the original recording, requiring a generation loss for material having no VITC. Also, VITC is extremely rare. Most studios are set up for longitudinal time code only.

## Using Time Code

The editing computer uses time code to find a given frame. The computer reads the time code off the tape as it plays or shuttles. When a time code number is entered in the computer, the computer compares the number with the time code on tape. The videotape machine will cue fast foward if the number is higher, rewind if the number is lower, and eventually stop at the cue point. To work properly, time code must be ascending, each frame coded with a number greater than the previous frame.

Editing systems that use the video control track to determine edit points will slip. The place where the edit occurs may drift by several frames each time the edit is previewed or recorded. With time code, frame-accurate editing is possible. Greater



precision is not the only difference. The editing computer keeps a list of the **in points** and **out points** of all the adjacent shots. A shot recorded on the edit master can be reentered and continued, and the edit will not be visible. This is known as a **match edit**. Some people call it a pick-up edit.

The ability to do match cuts defines the on-line edit. A shot can be lengthened. A shot can be reentered for inserting a title. Audio will remain synchronous when rerecorded (in a separate edit). A series of dissolves requires match edits. An edit is made before each dissolve to load the playback tape needed for the next dissolve.

A match edit is best performed immediately after the original edit, as the TBC set-ups (brightness and color adjustments) are still set for the shot in question. Matching back later in the day or in a subsequent session may be time-consuming if these settings have been changed for another tape.

## Dealing with Code

Time code is produced by a generator and deciphered (displayed) by a reader. Time code cannot be simply copied from tape to tape; if it is not regenerated or reshaped, the dubbed code may be too distorted to work properly.

Time code should be applied to an entire tape; the computer will not be able to cue a tape with partial coding. Continuous code—code without a numerical break or jump—is helpful but not necessary. If a jump in time code occurs, as long as the next time code number is higher, the tape will still cue properly over the jump. But if the desired in point is within the first few seconds after such a jump, the editing computer will be unable to do a **preroll** for an edit, which requires five seconds of continuous time code.

This problem can be avoided during production with the time code setting in the video recorder. When a internal generator is set to **free run**, the time code generator runs even when the recorder is not recording. Every time the camera starts and stop, there will be a jump in the time code. Free-run is useful only in multicamera production, for later syncing of different cameras by identical time code numbers.

On the other hand, when the time code generator is set to **rec run** or **jam sync**, the time code generator runs only when the VTR is recording, and produces continuous time code over each stop and start. This means preroll room to cue up to any frame of the tape. This is certainly preferrable in documentary production, where a camera operator will often start recording quickly when something happens.

Portable production VTRs with time code generators (Betacam and BVU) are usually set by means of switches. The internal/external switch determines whether the time code should be taken from the internal generator built into the machine or an external time code feed (used in multicamera production). The rec run (jam)/free run switch determines whether the time code continues running when the recording stops. The DF/NDF switch determines whether the generator functions in drop-frame or non-drop frame mode.

**Striping** is the process of recording time code on a tape after it has been recorded. This is not as simple as plugging a time code generator into the VTR. If the time code generator is not **gen-locked** to the video, the numbers no longer line-up with the actual frames, and there will be tape cueing problems in the edit. Watch out for nonprofessional time code rigs advertised at amazing prices; they may not have a gen-lock capability.

Three-quarter-inch machines were designed before time code was common. Most BVU machines have a time code head (separate from the audio heads) that produces an address track code. Unfortunately, the code is recorded with the video track, and this address track cannot be "striped" later. One of the two audio tracks must be used. If this is not possible, the tapes must be "bumped" up to a format (e.g., 1") that has a dedicated time code track.

Although certain editing computers deal with this better than others, editing without code may double postproduction time. The amount of time spent in postproduction depends on how the producer uses time code.

*Rick Feist is an on-line editor and a member of the Standby Program.*

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# No More Causes?

## The International Experimental Film Congress



A West German TV crew prepares for an interview with filmmakers Pat O'Neill and Stan Brakhage (seated on table) at the International Experimental Film Congress. Brakhage's address to the Congress set the tone of the proceedings, arguing for a cinema removed from overt political concerns and theoretical constructs.

Photo: Bill Stamets

Paul Arthur

In the zero-visibility world of avant-garde film, what passes for a Big Event can frequently be held in someone's closet under the auspices of jug wine and a borrowed projector. In this light what transpired in Toronto during the first week of June demands a markedly different vocabulary: BIGGER-THAN-BIG; EXEMPLARY; UTOPIAN; NEW AND IMPROVED. For the first time in a decade, a healthy cross-section of makers, scholars, curators, and students (roles not mutually exclusive) gathered in a hospitable environment in order to exchange images and information, review past achievements, and worry about the future. Culminating more than a year of planning—backed by funding of $100,000 (Canadian) obtained from a variety of university sources, government agencies, and corporate donors—the Congress ran its course not like the rickety contraption one expects of the avant-garde but like a finely-tuned machine able to sow and reap in one movement. In the end, this very smoothness of operation, the bracing sense of common terrain, of mutual regard and purpose, wound up concealing nearly as much as it affirmed.

With its broad scope and highly rationalized structure, the Congress combined the prerogatives of a major film festival with those of an academic conference, tossing in a few novel programs for good measure. Over 200 films from a dozen different countries were screened (with the U.S., Canada, and West Germany claiming the lion's share); several dozen papers covering a myriad of topics and critical approaches were delivered in early morning sessions; and freewheeling panel discussions, technical talks and presentations, brief lectures, audience debates, a book party, and a closing forum for "self-critique" filled in every available second (and this represents only the officially-sanctioned schedule). The day-to-day barrage of participant needs, wayward prints, and public relations was overseen with remarkable grace by a voluble and indefatigable Jim Shedden, an Innis College (University of Toronto) film student. General policy, the choice of topics and speakers, and a mass of leftover details were the province of an executive board consisting of a local filmmaker, a professor of film and literature, and several arts administrators. Despite its size, the entire affair seemed to function on a tiny staff, with individual board members and paid employees evincing the sort of harmonious relationship that came to characterize the Congress as a whole.

It was, unquestionably, a triumph on two fronts: that of organization, the democratic meshing of groups and discursive tendencies (e.g., artists and historians) which rarely have occasion to interact on neutral turf; and that of spectacle, not just the amount of film but the revelatory brilliance of both some new and little-known work. In addition, basic principles informing the structure of the Congress will hopefully serve as a model for future events. With a couple of minor caveats, the spirit of internationalism succeeded in marking differences as well as solidarity in the current project of experimental cinema. Despite naive protests to the contrary (see the collectively-signed letter published in this issue), both younger filmmakers and women artists were accorded adequate treatment.

The nightclub atmosphere and helter-skelter quality of late night open screenings were a sticking point for many participants—a miscalculation acknowledged by the organizers—even though the actual projection conditions and audience response were often better than at showcase screenings (one of the unanticipated pleasures was the opportunity to see the work of curators and other colleagues who rarely, if ever, have a public showing). And against expectations, video did not turn out to be the disavowed Other of "real" movies. Inevitably, there were errors of omission—a notable one

being the virtual absence of important American West Coast artists. But these were finally less telling and constraining than the largely unannounced, though hardly unformulated, cultural ideology which lent the Congress its sinew and its prescriptive force.

## Congressional Politics

Unsurprisingly to many, Stan Brakhage set something of the "moral tone" when he spoke, during a panel discussion entitled "Film as Film," of there being only one true "cause," that of Art. He spoke movingly of a resolve to continue working as long as there existed a single foot of film in any gauge, and said that if stranded on a desert island he would resort to carving stones in sequential order and knocking them over to simulate the effect of the moving image. But while Film Art, in Brakhage's vision, can "create a world," a complete ecology balanced in human and aesthetic terms, there is no room in such a world for manifest political concerns. "Causes," he proclaimed with scriptural indignation, "*unbalance* people and human behavior," revoking beneficent instincts (and, by inference, true creativity) and replacing them with a willingness to "stamp you into the ground." He named no specific targets, yet the burden of his remarks was clear enough: films that attempt to "illustrate" or otherwise engage theoretical constructs (of any sort), or, relatedly, explicitly argue against or for immediate social conditions violate the tenets of genuine Art. This radically conservative ethos emerged as Toronto's password, articulated and demonstrated subtextually over and over again as the week progressed.

By any reasonable standard, Stan Brakhage has produced more great films—enduring, generative, ecstatic—than any other living person (indeed, the premiere of the fourth part of his *Faustfilm* was among the highlights of the Congress). His teaching, writing, and lecturing, as well as his films, have exerted a tremendous influence upon two generations of North American filmmaking. Nonetheless, the wholesale adoption of his ostensibly anti-doctrinaire values would act to mire the avant-garde in an idealist historical moment and social position far removed from current tasks and determinations. Moreover, as David James has powerfully argued in his recent book *Allegories of Cinema* (Princeton University Press), the aesthetic "purity" of experimental movements of the fifties and sixties, the object of so much recuperative energy in Toronto, is itself open to a considerably more progressive, materialist reading.

Although never aired directly in a public forum even by Brakhage, the desire to rescue, to celebrate and extend, the threatened virtue(s) of the old avant-garde peeped through the folds of nearly every program and every global decision informing the Congress. Fred Camper, whose multifaceted and thoroughly catholic support for the avant-garde has been a constant since 1965, came perhaps the closest to an outright declaration. During a panel moderated by critic Annette Michelson called "Cinema's Phoenix: Deaths and Resurrections of the Avant-Garde," Camper repeated his charge (first levelled in an article for the twentieth anniversary issue of *Millennium Film Journal*, one of several admitted stimuli in the genesis of the Congress) that the "institutionalization" of the movement since the early 1970s has choked off its creative wellspring. To counter the resulting "sterility," he called for a return to a "deep engagement with issues *outside* cinema, with the world and our sense of it"—as if Hollywood movies, TV, or written texts were somehow less a defining aspect of our experience, and thus less worthy film subjects, than trees or dead dogs.

In a taped conversation, Jim Shedden was even more blunt. "The avant-garde," he said, "is not for all people at all times, it's an acquired taste." He went on to castigate efforts to politicize experimental film as "naive and self-serving...an instance of bad faith." While Shedden was quick to disassociate his remarks from official Congress policy, Bart Testa, the most prominent intellectual presence on the executive board, spoke directly and passionately to what was perceived as the implicit "party line." In an interview conducted on the final day of the Congress, Testa, whose teaching and writings have served as something of a nodal point for the Toronto film community, stated that the dissolution of boundaries between the avant-garde, independent narrative, and political documentary has had disastrous consequences. Younger audiences no longer have a coherent aesthetic context from which to understand the strongest work, and current trends in criticism have only confused the issue or buried it in polemics.

Testa argued that the avant-garde has, or should have, a "relative, if problematical" autonomy and purity of aspiration. In what he pronounced as an "aestheticist view," in which "ideology and aesthetics are opposed," the avant-garde movement must maintain its distance from mass cultural forms and concerns, and from Hollywood in particular, or see its arena of "poetics" robbed and diluted. In this regard, he scored filmmakers such as Patricia Gruben, Sally Potter, and Peter Wollen, whom he accused of using the experimental cachet as a springboard to full-scale commercial production. Moreover, the "obligation to be political" is a self-mutilatory dead-end which will only result in driving away the movement's "true audience" and leaving abandoned its previous achievements (of which the Brakhage *oeuvre* becomes an implied victim).

Donning the mantle of liberal humanism, Testa denied that the Congress was intended to be more than a "descriptive survey" and stressed the complete freedom granted to outside curators and speakers. If there were palpable liens of continuity or gross exclusions, these were, he suggested, more the product of subjective accident than conscious doctrine. To be sure, the Toronto Congress was but a single event attempting to scan what is at this juncture a highly fragmented and disparate cultural phenomenon—whose future grows more occluded with each passing year. It was fitted quite precisely to the needs, especially the gaps in knowledge, of a local scene. Among other subtexts was a battle for recognition and for control of government funding in which the desire to fend off the incursions of documentary and feature-length narrative took on a quite pragmatic edge.

Nonetheless, even if one acknowledges the contradictions generated by an internecine economic and political agenda, certain repressions cannot be left unexamined. Given the 90-minute screening slots accorded to curators, along with themes such as "Buried Treasures" or "Collage Films," a natural (if not mandatory) inclination was to program clusters of interconnected short work. A casual observer—equipped with steel eyeballs—who watched the entire catalogue might conclude that the avant-garde consists solely of films without scripts, actors, or stories that had a maximum running time of 30 minutes. Our imagined outsider could not fail to notice that the vast majority of films featured rapid assertive editing, non-sync sound, an image system denatured by optical printing or superimposition or a host of related techniques, and many relied upon the reflexive appropriation of found footage. In a word, "abstraction," that loosely applied catchall term, held center stage. Regardless of how the trend evolved in separate quarters, even the artists and types of film celebrated from previous periods such as the twenties and sixties (Hans Richter and Oscar Fischinger; Marie Menken and Carolee Schneemann) wound up bolstering an identifiable and rather narrow paradigm. By extension, a rich heritage of psychodramatic narrative, quasi-ethnography, and other important tendencies was made to disappear.

This helps to explain, although it does not excuse, the virtual absence of so-called deconstruction or New Narrative (either long or short) as it motivates the shockingly minimal attention given to feminist theory, to which current fashions in experimental narrative are intimately tied. Sure, there were plenty of women filmmakers and even several occasions on which the impact of feminist thought and politics for avant-garde practices was broached. Yet by failing to invite all but a couple of the most articulate spokespersons for the primacy of feminist analysis, this broad current in contemporary discourse became wedged into a tiny and insignificant corner. In addition, because conference organizers chose not to emphasize questions of distribution, exhibition, and general consumption of avant-garde work, a logical forum for the airing of feminist objections—indeed, of political critiques of all sorts—was excluded by default. As for possible controversies over the representation of race and class, the proscription of what Testa referred to as "socially-oriented" experimental documentaries all but silenced an area that has increasingly troubled progressive elements within independent filmmaking.

## Open Letter to the Experimental Film Congress

Let's set the record straight.

We challenge the official History promoted by the International Experimental Film Congress to be held in Toronto this spring. The time is long overdue to unwrite the Institutional Canon of Masterworks of the Avant-Garde. It is time to shift focus from the History of Film to the position of film within the construction of history. The narratives which take up this new task must respect the complexity of relations among the many competing and overlapping histories which make up the activity within the field.

We are concerned by the tone which pervades the announcements for the Congress. The recognition belatedly accorded to "the founding women of the avant-garde," the ceremonious embalming of lively, refractory work, the minimal attention given new work, the organization of screenings along nationalistic lines, and the "open"—read "unpaid"—screenings for those willing to pay $100 for the privilege, all betray a tokenism blind to any activities outside the officially sanctioned margins. And if our analytic concerns seem to prejudge the event, they are borne out with desolate clarity by the record of the Congress organizers in attempting to suppress dissent within their own community. Their efforts in Toronto against the Funnel Experimental Film Centre and against feminist film theory speak for themselves.

And while the putatively timeless Internationalism of the Congress should make it all things to all people, the overwhelming majority of the announced participants consists of representatives of the sixties Avant-Garde and its decaying power base. Only one or two younger filmmakers have been made part of the official program, though some of us will at least be discussed in our absence. Workshops are dominated by technological values and are lead exclusively by older men. In this context, the organization of screenings along nationalist lines promises a replay of the results with which we have become all too familiar over the past decade: a government-subsidized inventory of products suitable for export. Work is chosen to minimize linguistic, sexual, and cultural difference, typically to conform to the model of the "universal language of form" so dear to institutional esperantists. Difference is recognized only where it can be recuperated and diluted to a tepid pluralism.

The "open screenings" at best provide an image of damage control. These screenings, as the de facto venue for new and unrecognized work, have been scheduled mostly for late in the evening at the end of full days of featured panels, workshops, and screenings. Even without average festival delays, this scheduling usually bodes poorly for attendance. The priorities of the Congress organizers are clear: those without established institutional credentials are to be marginalized within the consolidation of the official margins, to be presented as Film Historical leftovers.

There is a spirit of mind which continues to challenge the hegemony of industry, of government, of bureaucracy. The revolutionary frame of mind pervading activity in film in the teens and twenties and again in the fifties and sixties—which seemed to die in the seventies—continues to thrive, but only where it has shifted and migrated according to changing historical conditions. The issues that galvanized the Cinema Avant-Gardes of earlier decades arose from different conditions than those which confront us today. An event which promotes itself as of major importance to Experimental film and fails to reflect the vitality and breadth, the vulnerability and urgency of current oppositional practice in the media renders nothing but obeisance to a moribund officialdom. It risks nothing but its own historical relevance.

The Avant-Garde is dead; long live the avant-garde.

Caroline Avery
Peggy Ahwesh
Timothy S. Allen
Craig Baldwin
Susan Banas
Jay Blankenship
Emily Breer
Don Brennan
Barbara Broughel
Edmund Cardoni
Abigail Child
Romy Charlesworth
Tom Chomont
Catherine Clarke
Bill Daniel
Moyra Davie
R. Dickie
Paul Dickinson
Jesse Drew
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Ross McLaren
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Christine Tamblyn
Leslie Thornton
Christine Vachon
Luis E. Vera
Susanna Virtanen
Jack Walsh
Dan Walworth
Andreas Wildfang
Sarah E. Wright
Tom Zummer

## Moving Pictures

If the shortcomings of the Congress should not ultimately be reduced to a debate over which films or individual critics failed to gain entrance, its overall success was in large measure a reflection of the brilliance of a handful of new or unfamiliar movies. The week was launched with a tribute to Canadian painter and filmmaker Jack Chambers, who died in 1978. His masterpiece, *Hart of London* (1968-70), is fairly well-known—at least among *cognoscenti*—but its power increases with every viewing. Composed mostly of newsreel footage, including the emblematic sufferings of a deer trapped in an urban morass, *Hart* has the look and feel of a personal archeology. Its structure makes extensive use of superimposition to sift through layers of horizontal imagery that collide around a group of visceral oppositions: positive and negative; birth and death; building and destroying; animal and human. It comes as close as any film I know to etching the boundaries of subjective consciousness in its interplay with a public space of ritual.

On the same bill was the rarely seen *Circle* (1967-68), a fixed-camera exploration of a suburban backyard caught in roughly four-second glimpses (recorded at 10 a.m.) over the course of one year. Convened through the cycle of natural changes in landscape, a proscenium-like space appears to shrink and expand, its multiple bands of dramatically lit depth serving as an epic theater of domestic activity and its physical traces. Chambers' films cause the screen to breathe and shudder and they elicit a meditative response that can tilt in the direction of inchoate terror. The screen came alive in a different way during the program of "Abstract Films of the Twenties," expertly curated by Californian Bill Moritz. Classics such as *Ballet mécanique* and *Entre'acte*, with musical scores by George Antheil and Eric Satie respectively, appeared in immaculate prints which suddenly lent new perspectives to these well-trodden texts. Among the real revelations, however, was the eight-minute *Wax Experiments* (1923), by Oscar Fischinger. Without benefit of his usual play of color, a series of undulating grey-on-grey meltdowns became so hypnotic that for a time an illusion was generated that the screen itself was twisting and buckling with heat.

In the category of new discoveries, Pittsburgh filmmaker Brady Lewis and his deft stylistic admixture, *The Suicide Squeeze* (1987), made a lasting impression. Lewis, a working colleague of citifunk documentarian Tony Buba, squeezed a self-referential *film noir* riff, a fake educational documen-

## Response from a Congress Executive

The editor of *The Independent* asked me to remark on a petition that originated in New York City that was to be published as a sidebar to Paul Arthur's report on the International Experimental Film Congress held in Toronto. I served on the Congress executive board. Both the petition and its cover note (which is not reproduced here) speak of themselves in a passive, anonymous voice. This is an issue for me since I am being asked to answer charges against the Congress but do not know their author. The petition bears about 80 signatures, so I suppose these charges can be said to have been made by those who signed. But that's a fiction, since they were framed and circulated by somebody. Somebody unnamed. Anyway, the petition only came into the hands of the Congress organizers the day before the event through a Toronto newspaper reporter. It was distributed to the press but not sent to us. This was a deft PR move since it made it impossible for us to respond to the charges while ensuring that the charges were part of the news story of the Congress.

These charges—formalism, canon-mongering, technologism, sexism, nationalism, hatred of the young, "esperantism," and so on—are broad enough to make any facts irrelevant in the case at hand, even after the event. As categories their definition is impossible to grasp in any particular way. For example, I wish I knew just what the official history of the experimental cinema might be, in what its "institutional" canon might consist. However, I doubt that the Congress' request to many of its programmers—to select the best work of the last six years—could have conformed to a canon or its history. We wanted to make a follow-up to the Third International Avant-Garde Festival in London 10 years ago, and we felt the avant-garde film had become so varied that only a wide curatorial group could do the selection effectively. As for the several retrospectives, like the Chambers, Frampton, and twenties abstract films, not all of them could be said to have belonged to the "60s avant-garde and its crumbling power base." As for the "universal language of form," nothing so neat or naive was imagined. The curators had their own agendas, as we hoped they would. The whole point of organizing the Congress partly along national (really geographical) lines was to ensure the curators could work in "linguistic" and "cultural" areas with which they were familiar. Please note the contradiction between the charge "nationalistic" at the top of the petition's third paragraph and the charge of "timeless universalism" a few sentences later. I could go on: the open screenings were often SRO—people who work days came out for them, as we hoped; the practica were led by "older" filmmakers (and Joyce Wieland was one of these), but why have young and inexperienced filmmakers do them? And, frankly, a workshop not concerned with technical questions would be just a lecture.

Anyone could make charges like these against any event like the Congress. Any look to the past is under a cloud of canon-mongering. Any selection of international films can look like the work of "institutional esperantists." But there are other, more personal charges against the organizers arising in the petition that pretend to knowledge of the film scene in Toronto: that we worked against the Funnel Experimental Theatre and feminist film theory, both supposedly embodying "dissent within their own community." Well, the Funnel was a well-funded, state-sponsored, artist-run theater/production operation for experimental film that ran itself into the ground through mismanagement. This culminated in an ill conceived relocation into a newly gentrified neighborhood and renovations for which the Funnel did not have the money or the planning sense to carry off. Before the Congress planning was well underway or funds solicited, the Funnel committed suicide. Now someone—but who?—wants to lay murder charges.

No one could substantiate the charges that organizers of the Congress make efforts against feminist film theory. Only one of the executive board members works in film theory, myself. Another member, Barbara Sternberg, is arguably a feminist filmmaker (I have made that argument in writing about her *A Trilogy*). The other members, who are curators, have done much to keep women's films on the movie screen. (Cathy Jonasson of the AGO ran a Chantal Akerman retrospective last year, for example; for another, Doina Popescu of the Goethe Institute is just now organizing a feminist aesthetics symposium.) I should also add that feminist film theory enjoys such a prominent place in film education here in Toronto that it is quite ridiculous to think of it as a "dissenting" view. It is actually a varied and highly self-reflective orthodoxy.

It is absurdly easy to make charges like those contained in the petition, and to pick up signatures. It is not so easy to answer them, or to bring oneself to sign a defense as its author and so be subject to nameless accusers' further slanders.

BART TESTA

tary, a childhood baseball fantasy, abstract animation, and about six other disparate fragments into a loosely-hinged comic narrative in which avant-garde and Hollywood tropes careen like an overactive pinball machine. The various parodic elements are fashioned with great technical assurance and a most original (and zany) flair for the patterning of correspondence. Also of note, the West German Michael Krause—who, like Lewis, screened his work during the beery "open" bashes—showed two musically propelled picaresques of alienated Berlin youth that made the act of editing into a version of mental karate.

Noll Brinckmann, a critic as well as a filmmaker who splits her time between Germany and the U.S., showed a stunningly minimal still-life exercise in and about color. *Stief* (1988) employs an erratic hand-held camera in the close-up exploration of flowers and common domestic objects. What emerges is a tactile fabric of simple, repetitive shapes and intensely contrastive colors. There is a rare sensuousness to her work which suggests the distillation of a line of women avant-gardists from Menken and Mary Ellen Bute to Joyce Wieland. Wieland, perhaps the most underrated filmmaker of the massive late-sixties avant-garde explosion, was on hand for a noontime screening of old favorites such as *Patriotism* (1969), in which a squadron of prurient hot dogs perform military maneuvers in the bed of a snoozing hippie, and newer work combining animal motifs and the textures of landscape.

Perhaps the most significant and emotionally satisfying event of the entire Congress was the unveiling of Pat O'Neill's brand new hour-long 35mm ode to Los Angeles, *Water and Power*. With potential gigs at the Telluride and New York festivals, and the fragile aspiration for some form of regular commercial release, O'Neill's film carves out a fresh foothold—in more ways than one—for nonnarrative, optically-denatured lyricism. Filmed over a period of six years with a computer-controlled camera that O'Neill helped to design with money from a grant (a camera capable of repositioning itself from frame to frame in precisely-ordered trajectories, roughly on the principle of a super-intervalometer), *Water and Power* explodes with the energy of condensed natural cycles that interact with and key the dynamics of L.A.'s complex social network.

It is a film about myths and images—of creation, history, stasis, and evolution—in every sense of these terms. Desert vistas and tide pools are laid over the human shiftings of downtown city life. The Hollywood industry, in which O'Neill has labored for the better part of 20 years as an opticals technician, serves as both countermyth and apparatus of materialization. Iconography from a variety of genres including sci-fi, *film noir*, and Biblical epic are evoked or appropriated through found footage. Interwoven with a notion of how commercial cinema has "technologized" the landscape of L.A. is a subtle gloss on the intimate relations between the industry town and the avant-garde, ranging from Kenneth Anger in the late forties to Morgan Fisher. And in every sweep of sunset, every "stop" on the giant musical instrument of urban disarray, is a ghost of the movie machine—

psychic as well as material economy, formal language as well as camera and printer. It will claim a place as one of the greatest movies ever made about the city of dreams, at once perfectly consonant with the traditions of the American avant-garde and a singular opening in the wall that segregates that camp from its industrial Other.

## Epiphanies and Blindspots

The ideological thrust of the Congress and its display of remarkable movie-making constituted affective antinomies. There was much else that caused either quiet elation or frustration. A series of practica sessions invited filmmakers to discuss certain theoretico-technical aspects of their work. More often than not, these became occasions for an autobiographical musing on the joys and problems of creating in an uncharted terrain. Pat O'Neill's characteristically self-effacing and uncomplicated story of his romance with optical printing provided oblique but stirring insight into the genesis of a singular approach to image making. Robert Breer displayed the little file cards which are the basis of his animation process, wedding his rigorous investigations of the paradox of still and moving to a quotidian three-dimensional world of common appliances and household accidents. Brakhage, who has unquestionably made more different kinds of splices than anyone else in the history of the medium, offered some useful thoughts about what it means to join together chunks of image.

The notion of filmmakers speaking to a mixed audience of artists, critics, etc. on the loose subject of craft furnished an atmosphere of mutual challenge. The payoff was a near total avoidance of embattled posturing, of us-versus-them polemics or dismissive retorts of anti-intellectualism. Less fulfilling were the laudable efforts at bringing together disparate voices in panel discussions. In this venue, obvious distinctions in the ways that different social placements (for instance, academic professors and professional artists) prescribe different modes of verbal address for the same issue set up a constant round of statements and audience interventions held at crossed purposes. Controversy flared and then fizzled in a surfeit of personal anecdote, imputed jargon, or plain misunderstanding. There were a few notable exceptions. Michael Dorland of Concordia University in Montreal delivered a scathing and often humorous critique of national aporias in the Canadian avant-garde which stimulated direct confrontation. His materialist analysis of relations between cultural priorities/government spending and the privileged forms of avant-garde production, with film as a by-product of nationalist ideologies, had the effect of deflating a powerful myth of personal heroism and autonomy.

More frequently, however, a desire to maintain an aura of cordiality and community stifled, particularly among academics, what might have been sharp disagreements over the meaning of past achievements and the efficacy of current trends. A similar timidity seemed to inflect discussions of sexual representation, the application of post-structuralist theory to experimental work, and the competitive tensions between European and North American approaches. Only Noël Carroll, a philosopher and film aesthetician from Cornell, issued a frontal assault on a reigning body of theory (feminist psychoanalysis), and even then his methodical pounding fell on deaf or merely inadequately-prepared ears.

During the week of the Congress, the city of Toronto was gearing up for an even larger—and culturally more decisive—event, the opening of the Skydome baseball stadium. Newspapers were filled with reports of mismanagement, technical snafus, and a beat-the-clock mentality trying to patch together a "facade" of actual completion (scheduled for the final night of the film festivities). At a favorite breakfast spot, electricians told horrifying stories of bypassing every safety code and logical principle of construction in order to get the massive site ready for public consumption. To a man, they swore not to be within 50 kilometers of the place when the inaugural switch was thrown.

Like the Skydome, the Experimental Film Congress was intended to establish Toronto on the map of cultural innovation and vitality. In all probability, both have accomplished their purposes...and without the roof caving in. On the real facade of the stadium hang two huge gargoyle-like bronze sculptures by Michael Snow, the doyen of Canadian filmmaking. The piece is entitled *Audience* and features grotesque figures in a cartoonish choreography of vulgar animation; a strange vision to be greeting the paying customers. Snow conducted selected members of the Congress on a guided tour of his creation. The contrast of the two locations could not have been more pronounced. Yet for all the yahoo implications and capitalist machinations of the gigantic sports complex (it resembles the nose cone of rocket), there could have been and should have been room at the Congress for a few bad calls at the plate and a volley of Bronx cheers.

*Paul Arthur is a filmmaker who teaches film at Montclair State College.*

The author wishes to acknowledge his official participation in the Experimental Film Congress as a curator and panelist, for which he received an honorarium and reimbursement for expenses.

**On the last day of the Congress in Toronto, the remaining participants assembled for a critique of the gathering. At hand were Congress organizer Jim Shedden, executive board member Bart Testa, and advisory board member Howard Guttenplan, among others.**

Photo Bill Stamets





# Having It All

## Independents at the Cannes International Film Festival

Barbara Scharres

At the Cannes Film Festival the word independent can mean just about anything. There's something jauntily egalitarian in the way the label applies as easily to low-budget art as to low-down sleaze, with no particular stigma attached to either extreme in this world's largest flea market of films. Pick up a trade magazine of any nationality covering the festival and, like as not, the term "indie" will be used in describing a film with a synopsis like, "A group of friends raft down an isolated African river with a crazed psychopath as their guide." For a real taste of the netherworld of Cannes independence, however, it's necessary to roam the hallways of the giant luxury hotels, the Majestic, the Carlton, or the Martinez, where the film market claims floor upon floor for temporary offices and screening rooms occupied by the commerce of hundreds of distributors. There, the obscure, the different, and the daring are waiting to be found—along with companies you never knew existed and films you wish you hadn't discovered. Posters clog the stairwells and flash luridly from every door, lending a slightly sinister air to the plush surroundings—*American Skinheads*, *Zombie Hotel*, *Frankenhooker*, *Stuff Stephanie in the Incinerator*. Art house programmers share pastel sofas with entrepreneurs shopping for blood, guts, and action to watch trailers of films yet to be completed. Making the rounds of this market is an experience that puts the business end of the film world in perspective, grinding in the simple and perhaps clichéd truth that independent filmmaking, in the sense that independent is a euphemism for auteurist art, is a luxury that few can afford.



If the film market at Cannes provided occasionally hilarious insights into film as commodity, the official screenings offered a serious spectacle of another kind—the triumph of the new hybrid independents. Obvious enough that you could call it a trend was the high profile of filmmakers who in a few short years have graduated from self-financed 16mm films to glossy 35mm features with theatrical distribution, while apparently retaining a high degree of creative control over their work. Whether it was luck or just desserts, a significant number of independents were selected for official screenings, some catapulted to world prominence at this festival where recognition of artistry and recognition of commercial potential often go hand in hand. Indicative of the trend is the fact that newcomer Steven Soderbergh's *sex, lies and videotape*, an independent first feature, was not only chosen for the competition, but won the Palme d'Or, making him, at 26, the youngest winner in the festival's history. In the space of less than five years, Spike Lee, with *Do the Right Thing* in competition this year, and Jim Jarmusch, with *Mystery Train* in competition, have advanced from *cause celebre* newcomers at Cannes to household names. Three years ago, New Zealand native Jane Campion was at Cannes with the 16mm films she had made in film school in Australia, winning the prize for best short. This year she was back with the 35mm feature *Sweetie* in competition. The Quinzaine des Realisateurs (Directors Fortnight), traditionally a stronghold of independents, included in its international selection Wayne Wang's *Eat a Bowl of Tea*, Charles Lane's *Sidewalk Stories*, and Canadian Atom Egoyan's *Speaking Parts*.

In most parts of the world, the career choices for the auteur-minded filmmaker have usually been limited. In the United States, one option was to become an uncompromising purist and spend a lifetime making personal short films and $5,000 features on grant money for the cinematheque circuit. The other option was to enter the industry in some capacity, often as a director of exploitation films, in the hope of moving up to more respectable commercial work that may or may not offer creative latitude as part of the deal. Any way you look at it, the choice was between creative control and a mass audience. Except for a short-lived period of time in the early seventies, when major companies like Columbia experimented with giving money to young filmmakers of every description in the hope of capturing the youth market, there have been few circumstances under which the independent director stood to gain the best of both worlds.

Having it all, ironically the trendiest of late-twentieth century concepts, is implicit in the working methods of some of the independents showcased at Cannes this year, filmmakers who are finding ways around the choice between having a voice and having an audience. At the press conference for *Do the Right Thing*, actor Ossie Davis expressed the opinion that he had gotten his foothold in Hollywood with *Cotton Comes to Harlem* on Hollywood's terms, whereas Spike Lee has maneuvered a position where he can negotiate his own terms. Says Davis, "Spike Lee can make films independently with or without Hollywood."

How, or if, an independent filmmaker builds a base of power to achieve

**New York writer-producer-director Spike Lee as Mookie in *Do the Right Thing*, which was in competition at the Cannes Film Festival. At a press conference after the screening, actor Ossie Davis said of the director's ability to retain creative control, "Lee can make films independently with or without Hollywood."**

Courtesy Universal Pictures

Three years ago, New Zealander Jane Campion won the prize for best short with a 16mm student film. This year she was back with the 35mm feature *Sweetie* in competition.

Courtesy Autralian Film Commission



Lobby poster for the stylized, anti-formulaic gangster film *As Tears Go By*, by Hong Kong screenwriter and first-time director Wong Kar-Wai who successfully navigated his project through the convention-bound Hong Kong film industry.

Courtesy In-Gear Productions



that enviable negotiating position, and how they tread the line between freedom of expression and pressure from financial backers varies from country to country. Every story is different, and no filmmaker would claim that his or her experience represents a new era of maneuverability for the independent, yet in time the growing numbers may argue otherwise. Curious to know what the stories were and whether the similarities added up, I talked to several of the independent directors at Cannes.

A subversive strategy in production was favored by Hong Kong director Wong Kar-Wai of *As Tears Go By*, a selection in the Critics Week section of the festival. Wong succeeded in making his first feature, an intensely stylized gangster film, by masquerading the project as a conventional action movie. Relying on his contacts and reputation from six years of script-writing in the industry, he obtained backing for his film as the first venture of the In-Gear Production Company, an offshoot of action-oriented Wing-Scope, which had a coproduction and distribution arrangement with the gigantic Golden Harvest, Hong Kong's largest film company. With a producer who took a hands-off, wait-and-see attitude, Wong was able to keep the personal, anti-formulaic nature of his film a secret until completion. To his relief, *As Tears Go By* has thus far satisfied the aspirations of all parties with some success. Winning 10 nominations for the Hong Kong Academy Awards, the film gained instant notoriety and quickly grossed $11.5-million Hong Kong (about $2-million U.S.), twice what it cost to make, making its producers happy and putting Wong on the map as a director. Despite its fast pacing and extreme violence, it would seem that the deliberately distanced quality of *As Tears Go By* would leave an action audience confused and unsatisfied. Wong says, "They know something is different but can't tell what." In distribution the film will continue its double life, partly on the major festival circuit in the West. Retitled *Fatal Check-Out*, it will also be sold as an action film in West Germany, Pakistan, Turkey, Spain, and France. This forced flexibility is no issue for Wong, who pragmatically cites the fact that *As Tears Go By* pulled its own weight financially as the factor that will allow him to direct his next feature. It is also responsible for In-Gear's commitment to back three to five unconventional films per year by young directors.

American director Wayne Wang no longer believes, as he once did, that a film can function for two different audiences without being marginal for both. In his own career he has alternated between projects with varying degrees of mass audience potential, from the ultra-low budget 16mm *Chan Is Missing* to his latest and fourth feature, *Eat a Bowl of Tea*. Wang says, "I don't want to stay in one mode or the other; I think it's necessary to keep myself honest by bouncing back and forth." With *Eat a Bowl of Tea*, a bittersweet comedy "about sex, marriage and grandchildren," and, not incidentally, about Chinese assimilation in America, he was looking for broader distribution and support as well as a relatively mainstream audience. Wang started the project with the support of *American Playhouse*, a typical source for independents, but went on to get the backing of Columbia Pictures for his $2-million budget when the script was at the fine-tuning stage. Despite his belief in the strength of the script, he didn't quite believe that anything would happen when the producer approached the studio. "In a lot of ways, it was being in the right place at the right time," he says, "and maybe a little bit of luck, because David Puttnam happened to be at Columbia and he was willing to do these so-called 'smaller' films." Wang is not entirely optimistic about new possibilities of funding for independent directors: "It seems like anytime anything opens up, it closes very fast and you have to keep looking for new sources. Island, Cinecom, Atlantic, and Vestron are beginning to fade—that's going to hurt." Asked to describe the ideal level of support and distribution he could imagine for himself, Wang says, "If I answer as an independent, I just want to have not a whole lot of money but just enough money to make a film, and I hope that I won't think about the audience at all." He stresses that his next film, scheduled for completion this fall, is completely independent, financed by private investors in Hong Kong. Titled *Life Is Cheap but Toilet Paper Is Expensive*, it will be free of the restrictions on length, language, and form that Wang encountered in a studio-backed production situation. In fact, and he chuckles gleefully, "It's got a whole lot of violence, some interesting weird sex, and its language is very strong."

The spectre of restrictions of another sort bother Toronto filmmaker Atom Egoyan, whose *Speaking Parts* premiered at Cannes, Egoyan's first time at the festival. Having now made three features, each larger in budget and more technically sophisticated than the previous, he admits that the greatest risk he thought he took in making *Speaking Parts*, his first film in 35mm, was "making a film in the context of a budget that might have hurt my own concept." His funding was put together in three parts, with 45 percent coming from Telefilm Canada. Jean Lefebvre, the top-ranking Telefilm representative at Cannes, describes his organization as "a government bank that invests in the development of the Canadian film industry." In exchange, the filmmaker's primary obligation is to make a work "of cultural value." The remainder of the money came from Britain's Channel Four and Academy Films in Italy, a distribution company looking to buy into what it regarded as prestige productions. The arrangement with Academy was a presale that afforded the company no control over the production. With the largest budget of his relatively brief feature-making career, Egoyan discov-

ered the larger headaches that go with it: "No one gives you money without some input into the film. It's very important to let your partners feel involved in the film so they feel like they're getting their money's worth." While he felt pressure for *Speaking Parts* to recoup its investment, he says he was never pressured to produce a runaway hit. Egoyan sees *Speaking Parts* as a leap forward for his work in terms of production values, but a film that thematically remains as obsessed as his previous work—not a mainstream film, but more accessible than his others. "The producer side of me would like a larger public," he says. "The writer/director side, which predominates, doesn't care."

Québec director Denys Arcand made his first feature in 1969 and first screened a film at Cannes in 1972. While his reputation in Canada as one of the country's foremost directors has long been secure, the presentation of *The Decline of the American Empire* in the Directors Fortnight in 1986 led to wider recognition and a considerably larger international audience through commercial distribution on a scale that was new for Arcand's work. His *Jesus of Montreal* was invited to have its world premiere in competition this year. On the subject of his independent longevity he is affable and funny: "I'm 47 years old," he laughs in mock desperation, "If I'm not the establishment soon...." Arcand is passionate about his own noninvolvement in financing: "I never touch production. I don't know where the money comes from, and I don't care. I'm just a paid employee—that to me is the way to be free. I want to know how many days I have and how many people I can put on my screen."

Arcand devised the situation whereby he could function as a hired hand on his own films through the careful nuturing of production relationships and distribution opportunities created largely by his growing reputation. For instance, Union Generale du Cinema, the largest distribution company in France, put $1-million into *Jesus of Montreal* with no strings attached, based on the overwhelming box office success they had with *Decline*. The budget for *Jesus of Montreal* was $4-million Canadian (about $3.25-million U.S.), very substantial by Canadian independent standards. Despite this expanded budget, Arcand believes that he is still making films the way he did 15 years ago. "Some practical things change. I'm a little better paid than I used to be, and I don't have to drive the actors home at night, which I used to do, but it's still not Winnebagos and Teamsters." He adds, "I don't belong to a major company. I don't have major stars. With each film I'm risking not my neck, but the quality of my life over the next five years.... It's fairly easy for a Canadian director to make his first film, easier than any place I know. The problem comes in doing it for the rest of your life, to establish a career."

The job description for that career seems to have altered in recent years. A growing number of independents are unwilling to settle for total marginalization and, like these directors at Cannes, are taking various routes in planning the circumstances of their own broadened support. Broadened perspective is certainly part of the movement, and learning to grasp the opportunities in the commercial sphere while having the judgement to manage or minimize the demands is just part of the job. Wayne Wang sums it up when he says, "The independent movement is relatively young—everybody was coming out of the starting gate, everybody was learning—but now there's a little bit of history behind all of us. Maybe we've learned some lessons. We know how to deal with the business end of it, too." If it's a race for independent survival, as Wang implies, then just possibly the chameleon is winning.

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# Continental Exchange

## The Latin American Video Conference

Pedro Zurita
translated by Lucia Suarez

The Latin American video movement has been steadily growing and gaining momentum from the rich cultural and creative influences of the social movements on the Latin American continent. Furthermore, video has become the memory of towns and peoples. In the past few years, the video movement has gained ground and strength while continuing the search for new forms of communication and a common language between the different countries involved. This movement is working with conviction towards bridging socio-cultural gaps and opposing the pervasive, aggressive cultural influences of the developed countries.

This nascent phenomenon has its roots in the technological advances and expanding transnational industry of film and television, as well as the ever-growing influence of satellites, cybernetics, and telematics. These depict the prevailing phenomenon of the end of the twentieth century, since such scientific inventions can serve either as liberators or manipulative instruments.

Latin America affords yet another explanation for the origins and reason for the importance of video: video is increasingly used for social and community projects with popular and alternative objectives, as opposed to the common, transnational, and privately-owned means which film and cinema have traditionally employed. In the specific case of Latin America, the *pueblos* (villages) have developed their expressive and creative capacity autonomously. Thus, the video movement carries the implications of being a "liberator" in its social and community applications.

In a region that has been demarcated by domination, authoritarian politics, and exclusion, the rising use of video by hundreds of groups confirms the excitement and energy that informs movements toward a democratic society. Video work has served as a way to finally depict our *pueblos* on the large and small screens as the protagonists of the times we live in as well as showing the hopes we maintain. In the beginning of this both popular and alternative video movement, most producers found themselves experimenting with the more affordable half-inch format. However, due to technological improvements and the demands of the professional market, many now work with sophisticated equipment. In some cases video groups count on aid and material from other continents, especially Europe.

The movement has reached a level with specific connotations. For example, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Chile, and Uruguay have each held conferences in order to define and follow its currents. The Havana Festival of New Latin American Cinema has served as instigator and motivator for these other conferences. The responsibility for continuing the annual meetings has been confirmed by all of the participants in the reunion in Cochabamba, Bolivia, last June, which is likely to develop into a major event for the movement. This conference boasted a total of 86 foreign representatives and an equal number of participants from diverse groups throughout Bolivia, and it adjourned on June 23 after a week of discussions. The success of the Encuentro Latinoamericano de Video has paved a path with hopes and expectations for a brighter future.

The objective of this recent meeting was to assess the development of Latin American video and analyze its impact and efficiency as an instrument of communication. Five days of critical discussions, screenings, plenary




sessions, and the participation of well-known artists in the field who reported their experiences contributed to an enriching encounter for everyone who came. In this regard, the Popular Video Association of Brazil (ABVP) was one of the most outstanding groups. ABVP has a membership of over 200 independent groups, including TV Viva which has reached an unprecedented level of development and organization. TV Viva uses mobile video units in order to reach highly populated, poor sectors (*favelas*) for both production and exhibition of tapes.

Chile was represented by well-established groups such as Ictus, Proceso, and Teleanalisis. They proved that the years of persecution, searches, and detentions have only strengthened their position. Presently, the informative works by Teleanalisis are acquired through national and regional subscriptions; internationally, their works are solicited by news agencies.

In light of the prevailing oppressive social and political conditions in Peru, an unexpected number of producers and distributors from that country attended. Organizations of Peruvian peasants, indigenous groups, women, and adolescents are working towards breaking patterns the existing inequality. Peru also has an established movement of religious groups devoted to helping the *pueblos*.

Octavio Getino, codirector of *Hour of the Furnaces*—one of the most important films of the New Latin American Cinema—and coordinator of the Argentinean communications network Movimiento del Espacio Audiovisual Nacional, represented Argentina. In the context of Latin American film history, he discussed the importance of video on the continent. One of the most important sites of video production in South America, Uruguay, sent participants from CEMA and Imagen, as well as several other groups.

The participation of women was notable in this event. They supported many suggestions that will enhance the growth of the video movement. As a first step, video shorts on the theme of women and violence will be submitted throughout the year for presentation at next year's Uruguay conference.

Considering that the conference suffered from basic drawbacks, such as an unexpectedly large attendance, inexperience on the part of the organizers, and a lack of resources, the results and the responses from participants far exceeded expectations. The responsibility placed on the future hosts of the event will be greater. However, this will also guarantee a consistent development of the organizational process and critical analysis. Uruguay has agreed to host the conference in 1990.

Among the most salient resolutions passed by plenary sessions of the conference were: The video movement finds its roots amid the multiplicity of experiences in each country, with differing creative needs and genres, with unequal technological means and a collective feeling identified with social movements and social changes. This experience has a clear democratic vocation that values the plurality and diversity expressed by the movement. The autonomy of the movement and dedication to the regional integration of Latin America was confirmed. Additionally, the video movement will take advantage of opportunities for initiatives and sharing in the periods of time between the annual conferences, such as those afforded by the Havana Festival and other festivals throughout Latin America. However, all agreements pertaining to the movement, its organizational development, and content will be resolved in the annual events sponsored by the movement.

The concern of many participants was the creation of a continental organization, but they concluded that this is not an appropriate moment to form such a group, due to the present lack of resources. However, it was unanimously agreed that this is the time to strengthen organizations in those instances where there is support on a regional level. Furthermore, the institutionalization of annual continent-wide video conferences, preparation of information conserving collective memory from each country, and promotion of consistent exchanges of information and experiences will enable the development of a continental organization in the future.

With respect to television, the conference recommendations include: efforts toward making new audiovisual technologies, such as satellite, available; promotion of national communications and cultural policies that respond to the needs of each country; utilizing national resources as these become available; mobilizing existing efforts and resources to encourage the circulation of regional works (examples of this are the public television services of Latin American and Caribbean Association of Radio Diffusion, ULCRA).

The various groups represented at the conference agreed to establish exchanges of experience, reasearch, and methods of implementation, in order to respond to market demands while maintaining the values that are fundamental to the movement. Packages will be made for broad distribution, such as the Cuban-initiated, thematically organized Vision Latina program, which serves as an example of a successful distribution effort which has gained much attention. Each country will evaluate its modes of distribution. Ultimately, the goal is to create a Latin American network for video distribution within the present context.

The conference served as a basis for an agreement among groups and organizations working in different social sectors to encourage more unified, coordinated growth. On the other hand, community, peasant, indigenous, and youth groups compared their experiences with their counterparts at different levels. It was unanimously concluded that the lack of financing, distribution, and interest on the part of major television stations present serious setbacks for furthering the status of alternative video. It was noted that the closed doors of TV stations were especially aggravating in countries like Chile, where the dictatorship controls all forms of the media in its efforts to protect "democracy."

Video production in Latin America has made astounding leaps, but the critical analysis of this particular audiovisual space has not followed an analogous rhythm. The theme that will be discussed in the 1990 conference, which will take place in Montevideo, will be "Language in the Use of Alternative Video."

*Pedro Zurita, director of Videoteca del Sur in New York City, has produced numerous films and videotapes in Latin America. Lucia Suarez is the administrative director of Videoteca del Sur and is completing a degree in French and Spanish literature.*

# Across the Sexual Divide

## The San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival

Liz Kotz

The oldest and most established of the growing circuit of gay film festivals, the annual San Francisco event, organized by Frameline, presented a packed 10 days of programs last June. A catchall mix of independent films, made-for-television programs, an occasional older movie, and experimental film and video shorts, the San Francisco festival has assumed a critical role in the formulation and dissemination of agendas for lesbian and gay media. As a point of entry for countless foreign filmmakers to U.S. audiences, a launching pad for younger film/videomakers into national and international visibility, and a global clearinghouse for information about lesbian and gay media, the festival's influence is clearly international in scope. Now in its thirteenth year, Frameline's festival takes place at two theaters and this year reached attendance figures of over 19,000 admissions and box office receipts of over $100,000. Such a vast undertaking inevitably raises many questions about the constitution and boundaries of "lesbian and gay cinema," with shifts in programming reflecting changes, priorities, and crises of self-definition.



Among the most interesting questions raised at the 1989 festival were the places of sexuality—and erotic and pornographic representations—within lesbian/gay media. Responding to mainstream practices that isolate sexual activity into a highly-codified sphere, an effort to integrate gay sexuality into everyday life was evidenced in the otherwise vastly-different works of Toronto video/filmmaker John Greyson, New York City filmmaker Roger Stigliano, and San Francisco videomaker Cecilia Dougherty. The festival also suggested the very different needs, tendencies, and interests of lesbians and gay men. On a panel discussion on "Lesbian/Gay Media in the 90's," Canadian video director Marusia Bociurkiw challenged the tendency to talk about "lesbian/gay" cinema "as if there were no gaps between the words." During the festival, one could track a number of diverging agendas, between men and women, between different generations of producers, between "mainstream" and "experimental" cinemas, and at times between makers and audiences, suggesting the complexity of needs and expectations addressed, however awkwardly, by such a venture.

A major discovery of this year's event was the range of strong programs from Great Britain, much of it produced in affiliation with the landmark *Out on Tuesday* television series, which premiered last February on Britain's Channel Four. Presented under the title "Out on Four," the festival screened six hour-long segments from the magazine-style show. The original series, which ran for eight weeks, combines an at times uneasy mixture of "hard" news reporting and "soft" cultural coverage. In part this tension reflected the very different concerns of the male and female producers involved—a division which at times broke down into the men complaining about the women's "boring" political stories while the women complained that, whatever the topic, "The boys would come back with shots of men in their underwear," according to Clare Beavan, one of the series' producers. In the face of the occasional and usually negative representations of gay men and almost complete invisibility of lesbians on British television, the programmakers had to navigate the conflicting and almost overburdening expectations of their communities and the inevitable pressure that images be "representative." The result of long-term lobbying from many sectors of the lesbian and gay community, the final series clearly represented a compromise between many interests. With all its unevenness, *Out on Tuesday* represents a remarkable accomplishment and also, sadly, a reminder of how even the most modest goals for access to public television channels continue to be completely out of reach for lesbian and gay producers in the U.S.

While by no means a coherent whole, *Out on Tuesday* offered many intriguing glimpses of British lesbian and gay filmmaking. Screened on video as part of the series, British filmmaker Richard Kwietniowski's *Alfalfa* was one of the strongest and most provocative short works included in the festival. Using a simple concept—"a gay romp through the alphabet"—Kwietniowski plays with the subtleties of subcultural communication and the constitution of gay identities through shared signs and languages. Like much of the series, *Alfalfa* attempts to negotiate mainstream culture by means of inside jokes, humor, and a distinctly subcultural address, rather than with direct political contestation or explicit sexual representation. Questions of censorship and self-censorship are of course never absent from such a project, given a national climate in which definitions of obscenity are always "much more strongly enforced in relation to gay representations," as Beavan remarked, recounting the producers' fear that the government might censor a program on safe sex and penetration. Other enjoyable segments included a clip entitled *Disco's Revenge*, directed by Constantine Giannaris, which looks at the assimilation of elements of Black U.S. gay culture into the British music and dance scene,

**In German filmmaker Ulrike Ottinger's *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia*, a group of trans-Siberian travelers are kidnapped by a troop of Mongolian women.**

Courtesy filmmaker



**Undercover agent Dorian Gray (Lance Eng) in John Greyson's new feature, *Urinal*, in which a number of dead "gay" and "lesbian" artists research the policing of public washroom sex.**

Courtesy filmmaker

and Beavan's *Crimes of Passion*, an introduction to the growing world of lesbian detective fiction.

Stuart Marshall's documentary *Desire* was produced in conjunction with the Channel Four series, although a longer, 90-minute version was screened in San Francisco. *Desire* researches the complex networks of sexuality, discipline, and state power in early twentieth-century Germany, tracing the rise of Nazism out of a number of conflicting social formations. Combining extensive archival footage and interviews with German scholars and a number of individuals who lived through the persecution of sexual radicals, Marshall's troubling film attempts to pull apart the painful inconsistencies of German history from the apparent liberation of pre-Nazi Berlin to the ensuing massacre. It was a very sobering film to watch in 1989 in San Francisco, as the mostly-gay audience pondered the parallel between eras: living in a seemingly protected enclave in the midst of increasingly repressive national and international power structures.

The biggest disappointment of the festival was the withdrawal at the last minute of Isaac Julien's *Looking for Langston*, also aired in the *Out on Tuesday* series, due to legal threats from the Hughes estate. A poetic meditation on Langston Hughes' life and work, the reedited film will belatedly receive its U.S. premiere at the New York Film Festival. Given the gaps in lesbian/gay film festival programming of works by and about people of color, the loss of this eagerly awaited and critically acclaimed film about Black gay desire was especially significant.

As well as screening John Greyson's new feature-length film *Urinal*, the festival presented a brief overview of some of his energetic and politically astute videotapes. Greyson, who lives both in Toronto and Los Angeles, brings the urgency of gay and AIDS activism to innovative experimental media. A prolific and seemingly tireless artist, Greyson is one of the only producers under 30 one can imagine having a retrospective (which he did last spring in Toronto). In *Urinal*, Greyson resurrects and reclaims a number of dead "lesbian" and "gay" artists, including Frida Kahlo and Sergei Eisenstein. In a *Mission Impossible* replay, they are brought to present-day Toronto to research the policing of public washroom sex. It is to the film's credit that it manages to keep this unlikely plot going for a good two-thirds of the way, until lengthy documentary footage and interviews start to bog down the momentum of this rather audacious venture. In the most touching segment, a man arrested in a police raid recounts seeing the videotaped surveillance footage used to charge him with indecent acts. Despite all the horrors he has undergone as a result of the arrest, including the loss of his job, he describes how the experience of seeing himself being sexual with other men was empowering—a fascinating testament to the ambivalently charged power of media. Collaging mass media and porn footage with personal stories and socialist analysis, Greyson's earlier videos like *The Perils of Pedagogy* and *The Jungle Boy* explore gay desire across a range of discursive terrains. Funny, entertaining, and politically insightful with good music to boot, Greyson's work offers a provocative challenge—and even an antidote—to the increasingly dreary and rarified world of high art video.

Another festival favorite was Los Angeles-based Gregg Araki's new no-budget feature *The Long Weekend (o' Despair)*. Post-punk, tongue-in-cheek, and brilliantly accurate in its observations of the late-twenties art set, Araki's tale of three beleaguered couples—boy-boy, girl-girl, and girl-boy—and their ensuing games of musical chairs brought laughter to a packed house, despite vicious critical reviews in the local press. Clearly, Araki's humor is not for everyone, and the ennui-laden film starts to implode by the end as it runs out of its memorable one liners: "We're like the Lost Generation. Pepsi doesn't even want us anymore.... Shit, give her a joint and she turns into Susan Sontag." But, like his previous *Three Bewildered People in the Night*, Araki's *Long Weekend* offers a grainy, minimalist, black and white slice-of-life absent from the big budget world of 1980s independent features that gay cinema, in its try for mainstream acceptance, often replicates. Representing the lives of young gays, straights, and those who just can't decide, Araki's film plays with the instability and uncertainty of identities on the edges of the "gay community" and represents a major breakthrough for gay filmmaking. (Araki's hilarious press packet also deserves rave reviews.) Another hit in the "young gay life" department was Roger Stigliano's feature debut *Fun Down There*, an engaging coming-of-age drama about the transition from the farm to the big city, which also could have received an audience award for "sexiest film of the year." Taken together, Araki's and Stigliano's films offered an intriguing portrait of young gay male life on the coasts.

The works by women in this year's festival were generally weaker, and uneven programming plagued many of the shorts programs. Ulrike Ottinger's new film *Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia* was yet another in a series of eagerly-awaited but ultimately disappointing lesbian films. Billed as a lesbian *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Johanna D'Arc* embarks on a trans-Siberian train journey to the Mongolian steppes, ambiguously skirting the edges of pageantry, ethnography, and camp. While many of the spectacles were, well, spectacular, I found myself marvelling at the production management and wondering how much the film cost—never good signs. Energetically embracing exoticism, the film brings together threads that appear throughout Ottinger's work: outrageous to nonexistent plots, an everything-plus-the-kitchen-sink aesthetic, powerfully expressionistic theatricality, great costumes, cross-cultural observation and appropriation, and, of course, the inimitable Delphine Seyrig, nearly an icon in her own right. Still, the epic work remains somehow unsatisfying, less than the sum of its extravagant parts. In contrast, Marusia Bociurkiw's *Night Visions*, an hour-long, made-for-TV drama set in a multi-racial lesbian community, was very popular and came closest to meeting audience desires for stories addressing current community issues.

The seven programs of short films and videos, which made up the bulk of the lesbian sections of the festival, were frustratingly uneven. Including

powerful works by both emerging and established makers—among my favorites were Cecilia Dougherty's *Kathy*, a household tale of sex and pies, and Joan Braderman's talky but provocative blast at the seventies, *No More Nice Girls*—these programs nonetheless manifested a vague, programmed-by-committee flavor. I consistently wondered about the absence of strong new works: were they not submitted, rejected, or just never asked? Again, lesbian works were frequently tamer, less offensive, and less risky than the gay men's. I found myself wondering: who is trying to win this lesbian virtue contest? Is it that makers aren't taking certain risks, or that festival programmers, cowed by the sometimes hostile and politically-correct response of lesbian audiences to anything out of the ordinary, decided to opt for safe choices? In any case, with video coming to comprise a greater and greater portion of the festival's program, especially work by women, the time to tackle these questions has arrived.

Recurring divergences between lesbian and gay men emerged on a number of fronts. It was remarkable how frequently audiences divided along gender lines, the men going in while the women came out and vice versa. Despite increasing collaboration between men and women, especially among younger producers, audiences remain firmly divided; exceptions to this pattern were *Out on Tuesday* and *The Long Weekend*, where mixed subject matter generated mixed audiences. I found myself critical of Frameline's tendency to divide video, short film, and experimental programs into "men's" and "women's" shows. While this convention accommodates audience habits and expectations, it nonetheless made for some less-than-inspired collections of work, submerging connections and differences based on nongender determinants and preventing audiences from appreciating provocative interactions between lesbian and gay work.

Among the most innovative parts of the Frameline programs are the lectures by community figures and critics that they sponsor. Both Vito Russo's "Nelly Toons: A Look at Animated Sissies" and *On Our Backs* editor Susie Bright's "All Girl Action: A History of Lesbian Erotica" were well attended and well received by audiences. Russo's reading of cartoon figures as types of gay, drag, and sissy characters provoked a useful context for reexamining works usually considered asexual. Bright's presentation of clips of lesbian sex from independent and mainstream movies, straight porn, and lesbian erotic videos offered a look at representations across genres and a sense of changing cultural codes. Although most of the audience was familiar with the scenes from *Desert Hearts* and *Personal Best*, some of the pornographic films were discoveries...and more exciting. Bright, who is deeply involved in the emerging lesbian sex industry and has worked as a reviewer of mainstream porn films, established a valuable project in researching and reclaiming some of these images of lesbian sexuality for lesbian audiences. Such a project inevitably reopened long-running discussion about feminism and objectification, with some experimental filmmakers arguing that the Frameline event demonstrates that what lesbian and gay audiences really want is the commodification of homosexuality.

That such issues continue to be revived and rehashed is part of the value of the festival to local lesbian/gay communities. Bringing together many positions and opinions in its sprawl of films, videos, and other programs, the festival provides a critical forum for the considerable numbers of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and others not always integrated into more traditional gay institutions and activities. At the luxurious 1,500 seat Castro Theater—an art deco landmark—and the smaller Roxie Theater in the Mission District, crowds flowed in and out, all carrying on lively conversations and debates. With the growing sense of dispersal and differentiation among contemporary lesbian and gay identities and social networks, it is increasingly problematic to talk about "the gay community." And, despite the growth of local and national lesbian and gay publications, the homophobic, AIDS-phobic, and generally creepy representations provided by mainstream media sometimes make one long for good old fashioned invisibility. In this context, a public forum like the Frameline festival offers an invaluable opportunity for many, although by no means all, of the different lesbian and gay subcultures to come together and share experiences and reactions, and for straight audiences to engage with a multitude of lesbian and gay self-representations.

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# A Venerable Event Revamped

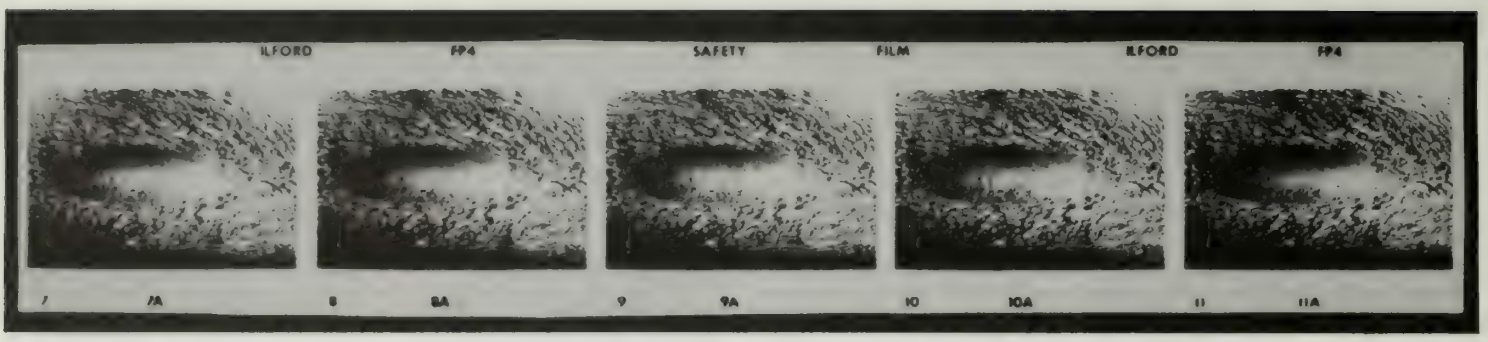
## The Oberhausen International Short Film Festival

Reinhard W. Wolf

Located about 60 kilometers north of Cologne in Germany's industrial Ruhr district, Oberhausen would only be renowned for its many motorway exits if it weren't the site of the most important short film festival in West Europe. The Westdeutsche Kurzfilmtage (West German Short Film Days) were founded shortly after World War II under the auspices of the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband (German Association of Adult Education Centers). The aim was to place an important cultural event in a neglected region and to open "ways to the neighbour," as the festival slogan still declares, during the McCarthy era and the Cold War. These two factors—the location in an industrial region with working-class traditions and an openness to the Eastern European countries—have continued to dominate the event. The festival established a reputation for showing documentary films dealing with social issues, and, for many years, Oberhausen was the only place in the West where you could see a movie from Poland or the Soviet Union. At the same time it was also known as a working event; glamor and stars would not suit the town of Oberhausen.

The festival center is the Stadthalle, a spacious convention hall built in the charmless style of the fifties, more suitable for May Day speeches or party rallies than film projection. Film critics have often criticized the festival as being more concerned with politics than film aesthetics, whereas local politicians and trade unionists frequently attacked it for what they understood as the opposite tendency. Always a place of debate and conflicts, in 1962 the festival became the forum for young filmmakers rebelling against the established film industry with their war cry, "Daddy's cinema is dead!" The famous Oberhausen Manifesto, however, was actually written in Munich.

Throughout the sixties Oberhausen provided a showcase for works dealing with new political and social movements. Yet the growing discrepancy between the political and the cinematic avant-gardes eventually led the festival into a cul-de-sac. In the late seventies and early eighties much of the current aesthetically innovative filmmaking was no longer represented there. Young filmmakers started to look for other outlets, which they found in less traditional avant-garde events in larger cities and alternative festivals, such as Interfilm Berlin or Experi Bonn. Only recent shifts in festival politics, often resisted by the local government's bureaucracy, have revived




the festival as an event reflecting the breadth of contemporary short filmmaking. These reforms are attributable to festival director Karola Gramann, who a few years ago moved to Oberhausen from Frankfurt, where she was an editor of *Frauen und Film* (*Women and Film*), a feminist magazine that is also the only German periodical concerned with film theory and avant-garde filmmaking.

Compared to earlier years, the 1989 festival presented a considerably enlarged program. In addition to the central competition with 15 two-hour programs, there were six programs of West German films and a dozen special sections. For the first time, this year the festival also featured an independent video program and a film market. Meanwhile, the festival continued its tradition of screening works from selected national cinemas; this year it was Argentina, Brazil, and Cuba in the Americas and Poland and the Soviet Union in Europe. The United States and Canada were represented by 10 and two films respectively, out of a total of about 90 films in competition. In addition, a four-part program featured U.S. avant-garde films of the sixties.

The special programs and sidebars provided enough films to fill a spectator's schedule for the entire week of the festival. The parallel Filmothek der Jugend, an event associated with the festival, offered an additional full international program mostly attended by Oberhausen's young people. The new video section, located in a different building, consisted of a retrospective from the most important German-speaking media workshops.

In a neighboring building, a recently renovated public bath now used as an exhibition space, Oberhausen's first film market was frequented by very few festival-goers. Intended to promote the faltering economy of the short film, this aspect of the event experienced a slow inaugural season. According to the market managers, the number of deals concluded this year at Oberhausen was higher than at any former festival, but there was no precise information on how many were concluded under the auspices of the market. As in the past, a number of sales were still negotiated directly with filmmakers or producers after their screenings at the festival. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the Oberhausen festival is the only event of its kind in Germany where a considerable number of short films find buyers, since the major educational and religious agencies are represented in Oberhausen. Still, it seems premature to evaluate the market based on this performance.

In conjunction with the market, steps were taken to establish an exchange of films between East and West, a function which the festival has informally realized since its inception. However, apart from an exchange of business cards by participants from France, Hungary, Poland, the Soviet Union, and West Germany, not much was achieved, since there was no institutional structure or sponsoring organization to facilitate activities. Relying on more individual initiatives, today's traffic in films back and forth across the Iron Curtain nevertheless remains impressive.

The emphasis of this year's international competition was on the short film as a genre. This means fewer documentaries and features and fewer short fiction films. Experimental and innovative short films were well represented—about a third, judging by the festival catalogue's categories. In terms of documentary shorts, the productions made in the Eastern European countries showed a surprising new tendency. Closely related to political changes and *glasnost*, now also affecting Poland and Hungary, many filmmakers are starting to employ methods of investigative journalism to examine social grievances and political scandals. For example, in his film *Microphone* Ukrainian director G. Sklarevskij researches the effects of the Chernobyl disaster on the people living at the border of the restricted zone around the nuclear power plant. The final few minutes of the film, which was awarded a prize by the Jury of International Film Critics (FIPRESCI), show a protest rally in downtown Kiev where speakers demand full information on the effects of the nuclear catastrophe and call for adequate measures to be taken. One of the doctors in charge of medical research indicates his willingness to speak out. But suddenly the microphone is turned off. The film ends with the echo of peoples shouting "Mi-cro-phon," which serves as a metaphor for the call for greater openness. Sklarevskij, a lean, sad but friendly man in his fifties, told me that in his long professional life he hardly had a chance to make a film of his own. Now that he can choose the film form he likes, he is unsure which road to take. Framing interviews with official newsreel footage at the beginning and the protest rally at the end of the film, he tried to use only a minimum of intervention to reach his aim: "To find the most natural form for mediating the truth as directly as possible to as many people as possible."

Short fiction films, which saw a revival at Oberhausen some years ago, were less in evidence this year and mostly hailed from Latin American countries. Many of these, especially the entries from Argentina as well as Brazil, appeared to be productions made off-hours in commercial studios. Among the fiction films two student works stood out: the Soviet prize-winner *Dogsoup* and the Polish film *The Worm*, from the strong Lodz school. *Dogsoup*, by Djahongir Faijsev, portrays a gang of outcasts, among them an Afghanistan War veteran, who pass their time in a scrapyard. Because they spend all their earnings on liquor, nothing is left for food. As their hunger grows they decide to hunt two stray dogs with handmade spears, hoping to catch them for the soup pot. Mariusz Grzegorzek's *The Worm* tells the story of a young girl from a bourgeois family in the nineteenth century who breaks her father's favorite teacup. She is then haunted by nightmares and fear of her authoritarian father. As in his earlier film *Krakatau*, Grzegorzek stages a spell-binding psychic study of an adolescent girl's fears, conveyed by expressionistic lighting and deep-focus photography that are reminiscent of Orson Welles' films. Unfortunately, this bizarre story ends with a heavy-handed and clichéd appendix that consists of a montage of photos of children in distress.

For the first time at the Oberhausen festival a prize for experimental film was awarded. Previously the only organization that recognized this film form was the national association of film critics. Thanks to a private sponsor from the town of Braunschweig, where an art school specializing in experimental film is located, this year's main festival jury gave a well-endowed prize to Dore O.'s *Blindman's Ball*. This not very risky choice perhaps reflects the jury's composition: of the 10 jurors headed by Georgian director Lana Gogoberidze only two, Rose Lowder from France and Gerhard Büttenbender of Braunschweig, are experts in experimental film.

Other notable films screened at the 1989 Oberhausen event were *Decodings*, by Michael Wallin, which employs archival footage from educational and scientific films of the forties and fifties to rearrange encoded aspects of

**Oppostie: *Felder 9.6*, by Thomas Mank, investigates the structural attributes of single film frames. It was one of the experimental film shorts shown at the Oberhausen festival, which began awarding prizes in this category this year.**

Courtesy filmmaker

**Right: *Serdolik (Cornelian)*, by Turmenian filmmaker Sapar Mollanijazov, documents folk games in this region of the USSR.**

Courtesy filmmaker



human behaviour and thus imply meanings not intended in the original footage; *Felder 9.6*, by Thomas Mank, who researches the structural attributes of single film frames; and Jean Matthee's *The Descent of the Seductress*, which analyzes a woman's portrait similar to Warhol's Marilyn Monroe, but then proceeds from the examination of a fetishized icon to reveal constructions of monstrous femininity and imaginary horrors.

Another outstanding film at the festival was a German super 8 work *Der narrative Film*, by Uli Sappok. This three-minute tour-de-force consists of refilmed television images of social and political catastrophes accompanied by an off-screen voice struggling to find the right words for what is seen. *Der narrative Film* was awarded two prizes, including the prestigious prize given by the signatories of the Oberhausen Manifesto and another given by a private sponsor.

Festivals such as Oberhausen provide opportunities to reflect upon the latest trends in filmmaking, which indirectly mirror the issues and conflicts of contemporary society. In this regard, films on social issues made in Western countries seem to be on the decline, whereas *perestroika* in the East allows filmmakers there to move in the opposite direction—trying to recover a stage of filmmaking which they never were able to develop. To be more precise, this tendency only accounts for trends in interventionist cinema with outspoken political intentions. But, for instance, only two German films in the festival program directly commented on the crisis in our steel industry and its effect on employment, which now dominates life in the Ruhr District where Oberhausen is located. Even in these cases—such as in Harry Rag's *Titanica*, which emblematically opened the festival—there is no outspoken criticism phrased in revolutionary language, but rather the criticism articulated through an impressionistic visual description of the situation.

With a few exceptions in the retrospective section, only one out of six programs in the noncompetitive German section of the festival was dedicated to films that treat social issues using conventional documentary realism. Just as uninspired and crudely made as their predecessors which prevailed at earlier Oberhausen festivals, these films cleared the hall of viewers. In the other programs, however, the festival programmers found that avant-garde films, which are often regarded as escapist, can be more deeply engaged in social issues than conventional documentaries. Skipping over some stages in this historical development, the festival program reflected some of the drastic changes that have been effected by avant-garde filmmaking in West Germany. The late seventies and early eighties saw the emergence and elaboration of punk and new wave aesthetics, characterized by anarchistic opposition to conventional scriptwriting, technical perfection, dominant cinematic language in general and, sometimes, audiences. Wrongly labeled nihilistic manifestoes, these films led a general attack on contemporary social structures as unacceptable bases for building a positive future. A postmodernist period followed, best described as a noncommittal, anything-goes attitude. Everybody—filmmakers and audiences alike—seemed quite willing to abandon aesthetic criteria for a while and indulge in playful aestheticism. The films of this sort were mainly fictional, with plush sets and chic personages. Finally disorientation, boredom, and a general perplexity indicated the dead end of this approach.

In recent productions, however, a return to values and commitments prevails, but with a more private focus than previously. Sensitive individuals and dramatic actions have returned, as has an interest in the formal aspects of filmmaking. Many of these films are set in private spaces, like kitchens or bathrooms. Also the naked—often male—body, so long absent from German screens, is a central figure in the recent work. In the most extreme variations these films display a decided narcissism. In formal terms, there is a tendency towards more dramatic, yet not strictly narrative form. Some films constitute outright reflections on this subject, like *Krause oder ein beschriebener Film ist wie ein erzähltes Mittagessen* (*Krause or a Described Film Is Like a Narrated Dinner*), the latest film by Christoph Doering, which was screened in the noncompetitive German section at Oberhausen, the fate of any film awarded a prize in another festival. The first part of the film is made in the tradition of the early eighties, a period upon which Doering had considerable influence. This section ends suddenly with the line, "Shit experimental film, now real cinema!" and a gun is fired at a TV set. The next sequence is shot in the style of a forties film noir thriller. Using this reference, Doering presents narrative not as a solution but as a question to be discussed.

Posing the problem of narrative structures, as Doering does in *Krause*, and the general lack of conventional plots in other avant-garde productions presented at Oberhausen demonstrates a new interest in redefining film aesthetics beyond the vocabulary of either conventional narrative filmmaking—documentary and fiction alike—along with the latest experimental films. The most striking leitmotif in the 1988 productions presented at the festival is the single, sometimes lonely, individual trying to recover a social purpose. Within such scenarios, private perceptions demand a new orientation in the language of cinema. The struggle goes on.

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## IN BRIEF

This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the **FIVF Festival Bureau.** Listings do not constitute an endorsement & since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. If your experience differs from our account, please let us know so we can improve our reliability.

## Domestic

ACADEMY AWARDS DOCUMENTARY AWARDS COMPETITION, April, CA. Academy Awards for doc film will be presented during 62nd annual ceremonies in spring. Films fall into 2 groups: doc features (over 30 min.) & doc short subjects (under 30 min.). Eligibility rules: Either 1) participation in "recognized" film festival btw Nov. 1, 1988 & Oct. 31, 1989. (Full list of "recognized" fests can be obtained from Academy & incl. AFI Fest, Brussels, London, NY, San Francisco, Sydney, Munich, Cannes, San Sebastian, American, Berlin, Chicago, Columbus, Hong Kong, Nat'l Educational, US, Venice.) If fest is noncompetitive, film must have been accepted for exhibition & screened; if fest competitive or w/ competitive section, film entered must have won best-in-category award. Or, 2) film must have been publicly exhibited for paid admission in commercial theater in LA-area for consecutive run of not less than1 week btwn Nov. 1, 1988 & Oct. 31, 1989. Or, 3) be recipient of CINE Golden Eagle. Or, 4) be final winning doc in Academy's 1989 Annual Student Film Awards competition. Films w/ 1st public exhibition on broadcast TV not eligible. Submit prints only, prepaid & marked "Documentary Film" (Academy pays return shipping). Academy retains right to keep prints of awarded films for archives. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Oct. 31. Contact: James Roberts, Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences, 8949 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90211-1972; (213) 278-8990; telex: 698-614; fax: (213) 859-9351.

DANCE ON CAMERA FESTIVAL, March 4, NY. Dance films of all types highlighted in fest held at American Museum of Natural History. Cats incl. religious/liturgical dance, dance company background, performance-dancer or dance company, biography-dancer or choreographer, technique-instruction, dance therapy & dance in education, ice dancing, music video featuring dance, experimental. Films must have distributor or possibility of one. Awards: Gold Star Award Certificate, Silver Star Award Certificate, Honorable Mention Certificates. Entry fee: $15-45, depending on length. Members of DFA receive 20% discount. Format: 16mm, 3/4". Deadline: Nov. 1. Contact: Susan Braun, Dance Films Assoc., Rm. 507, 1133 Broadway, New York, NY 10010; (212) 724-0764.

GLOBAL VILLAGE DOCUMENTARY FESTIVAL, April, NY. 1 of only US fests devoted exclusively to doc, Global Village fest, now in 16th season, seeks docs that "confront, question & provoke, explore new formal terrain & have strong artistic points of view." Fest committee incl. at-large documentarians & critics. From approx. 250 entries, awards given to outstanding video, film, made-for-TV productions & most outstanding work by emerging maker. Some cash awards accompany prizes. Attended by curators, broadcasters, distributors & doc enthusiasts. Fest defines doc as any work "whose key elements derive from reality: people, events, images, sounds & text." Nat'l or NY area premieres encouraged. Work must have been completed after Sept. 1988. Produced by Documentary Center at the New School for Social Research & presented by Joseph Papp's Public Theater. Format: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 16mm, 3/4", 1/2" (preferable). Entry fee: $30. Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Julie Gustafson or Robert Rosenberg, Documentary Center, Media Studies Program, New School, 2 W. 13th St., 12th fl., New York, NY 10011; (212) 741-5357.

MIAMI INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 2-11, FL. Features, docs, shorts, experimental & animated films accepted for 7th annual noncompetitive Florida festival. All subjects, lengths considered. Program, under theme of "For the Love of Film," historically incl. several premieres & Spanish language entries. Works must have be since 1985 & not in theatrical release in US. Program incl. series of special programs honoring individuals, countries & trends. Last yr 26 features from 16 countries unspooled. Most films play to sold-out houses. Format: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Deadline: Nov. 1. Contact: Miami Film Festival, Rivergate Plaza Bldg., 444 Brickell Ave., Suite 229, Miami, FL 33131; (305) 377-3456; telex: 264047 SPEN UR; fax: (305) 573-0658.

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, May 23-28, CA. Docs, live-action shorts, animated works, fictional productions, children's programming, made-for-TV programs, how-to videos & public service announcements eligible for this key competitive fest for educational media in US. Subject areas: business, careers, fine arts, health/safety, history, how-to, human relations, language arts, life sciences & ecology, media arts, physical sciences, recreation, religion, social studies, sports/leisure, teacher education, TV broadcast, student (for doc & narrative works). Awards: Gold, Silver, Bronze Apple Awards given in 150 cats; small no. of Gold Apple winners selected as Best of Fest Finalists & eligible for Oscar. Other special awards: Best Entry from No. CA, Best Production for Preschool-Gr. 6 & Gr. 7-12; $750 award to student winners. Jurors incl. subject area specialists, media professionals, purchasers, educators/users & students (when appropriate). Entries must have been completed, released for distribution, or first aired btwn Jan. 1, 1988 & Dec. 1, 1989. Entry fee: $75-145, depending on length; $45 filmstrips; $25-35 student. Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2", filmstrip, slide-tape; submit for preview on 1/2" (NTSC), filmstrips. Deadline: Dec. 1; late entries accepted through Dec. 15 w/ late fee. Contact: National Educational Film & Video Festival, 314 E. 10th St., Rm. 205, Oakland, CA 94606; (415) 465-6885/6878/6891.

ONION CITY FILM FESTIVAL, Nov. 10-11, IL. Held at Randolph Street Gallery in Chicago, fest screens experimental films up to 30 min. Judges for 6th edition are Trinh T. Minh-ha & Peter Thompson, who will award total of $2,000 in prizes. Entry fee: $25 (incl. return postage). Formats: 16mm, super 8. Deadline: Oct. 20. Contact: Laurie Dunphy, Experimental Film Coalition, 927 Noyes, Rm. 224, Evanston, IL 60201; (312) 226-8045.

POETRY FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Dec. 12-13, CA. 14th annual program for films/videos which incorporate verbal poetic statement in narrated or captioned form, integrating poetry & film. Awards: purchasing prizes, cable screenings. Sponsored by Nat'l Poetry Assoc. & held during Nat'l Poetry Week. Entry fee: $5, plus ret. mailing. Formats: 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Nov. 24. Contact: Poetry Film Festival Workshop, Ft. Mason Cultural Center, San Francisco, CA 94123; (415) 776-6602.

SAN ANTONIO CINEFESTIVAL, Jan. 31-Feb. 4, TX. 1 of nation's oldest Latino film events, now in 14th yr, fest shows approx. 100 works of Latino fiction, doc & experimental film/video, from US, PR, Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela, Brazil, Canada, Spain & Cuba. All entries should be of direct relevance to Latino community. Also on program are public forums on important concerns in mass communications media. Jury of producers & critics give Mesquite awards in cats of fiction, nonfiction, 1st film or video, special jury award, best home video. Entries should incl. synopsis under 100 words. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4". Entry fee: $15. Deadline: Nov. 1. Contact: San Antonio CineFestival, Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, 1300 Guadalupe St., San Antonio, TX 78207-5519; (512) 271-9070.

SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL/GOLDEN GATE AWARDS COMPETITION. Mar. 22-Apr.1, CA. This competitive sidebar to 33rd San Francisco Int'l Film Festival, presented by SF Film Society, honors shorts, docs & TV productions. Over 500 entries from 16 countries participate each yr. Divisions: Film/Video, Broadcast TV, Bay Area Filmmakers, New Visions. Cats w/in Film/Video: short narrative (under 60 min.), artist profiles (on painters, filmmakers, dancers, musicians, etc.), art work (docs on arts), history makers, history, current events, sociology. Must be completed btwn Jan. 1988 & Dec. 1989. Awards incl. best of cat w/ $250 honorarium, special jury trophy, honorable mention certificates. Broadcast TV cats: TV features, entertainment (comedy, drama, fine arts, musical variety), doc (historical, current affairs, environmental). Entries originally telecast btwn Jan. '89 & June '90. Bay Area: completed btwn Jan. '89 & Dec. '89. Awards: best of cat trophy & $250 honorarium in short subject & doc cats. New Visions: experimental film/video produced btwn Jan. '89 & Dec. '89. Awards trophy & $250. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2"; preview on 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Entry fees: $25-160, based on running time & division. Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Brian Gordon, Golden Gate Awards, San Francisco Film Society, 1560 Fillmore St., San Francisco, CA 94118; (415) 567-4641; telex: 6502816427 MCI UW; fax: (415) 567-0432.

THOMAS A. EDISON BLACK MARIA FILM FESTIVAL. Jan. 12, NJ. Now in 9th season, competitive fest "advances contemporary film & videomaking & seeks artistic & socially conscious works of any length, style or genre, solo as well as collaborative, which reveal character, boldness, compassion or insight, or which explore the medium's expressive forms &/or address vital human issues." 40 works later incl. in Travelling Showcase tour of Northeast, Midatlantic & Midwest from Dec. - April. No cats; each work judged on individual integ-

rity. Judges this yr: Larry Gottheim, ind. filmmaker & SUNY film professor; Amy Kravitz, ind. animator; Cara Mertes, WNET *Independent Focus* program coordinator; Sally Berger, MOMA video programmer & Flaherty Seminar director; Daniel Eisenberg, last yr's Grand Prize winner. Awards: 4 Grand Prizes of $750 ea., 10 Honorable Mentions of $250 ea.; add'l works chosen from semi-finalists by fest director. All share over $6,500 in royalties in Travelling Showcase. Last yr over 625 works submitted. Entry fee: $20. Formats: 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2"; preview on cassette. Deadline: Oct. 31. Contact: John Columbus, Thomas A. Edison Black Maria Film & Video Festival, c/o Edison National Historic Site, Main St. & Lakeside Ave., W. Orange, NJ 07052; (201) 736-0796. Send entries/fees directly to: Essex-Hudson Film Center, E. Orange Public Library, 21 S. Arlington Ave., E. Orange, NJ 07018.

UNITED STATES FILM FESTIVAL, Jan. 19-28, UT. Discovery point for many of yr's best ind. features (many US or world premieres). Prestigious Sundance Institute-sponsored fest, now in 12th yr & attended by wide cross-section of film/media professionals, sponsors competition for approx. 30 dramatic & doc features. Entries must be at least 51% US financed & completed no earlier than Nov. 1, 1988. Running time for dramatic films must be no less than 70 min.; for docs, no less than 55 min. Entries may not open theatrically before Jan. 12, 1990, in more than 3 N. American markets, be broadcast nationally, or play in more than 1 domestic fest prior to USFF. Films produced, financed, or initiated by major motion picture studios not eligible for competition (independently made films purchased after completion are). Judges for both doc & dramatic cats chosen from leaders in filmmaking field will award $5,000 Grand Prize. Other awards are Audience Award (popular ballot) & Filmmakers Trophy (filmmakers ballot). Jury prize winner of doc competition qualifies for Oscar consideration. Short films (under 55 min.) may be submitted for out-of-competition screenings. 1 rep per film invited to attend. Program also features int'l & historical programs & special seminars relevant to ind. production. Last yr selection of fest films screened in the Ginza, Tokyo. Entry fee: $30. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 3/4", 1/2", Beta. Deadline: Nov. 3. Contact: Independent Film Competition, United States Film Festival, Sundance Institute, Producers Bldg. 7, Rm. 3, 4000 Warner Blvd., Burbank, CA 91522; (818) 954-4776.

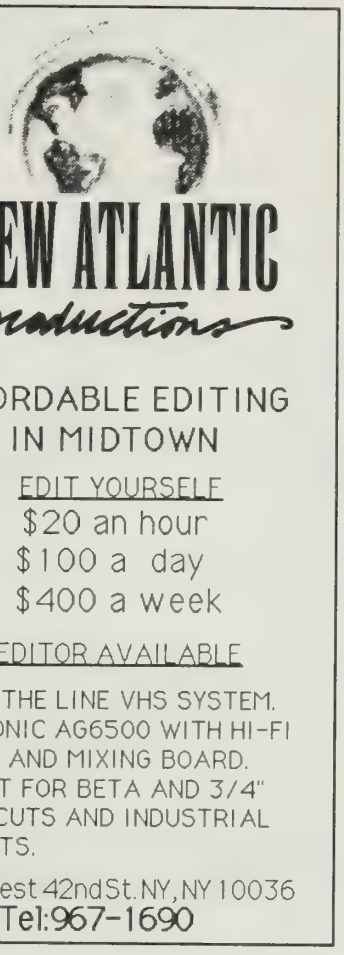
## Foreign

BELGRADE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, January, Yugoslavia. Annual noncompetitive FIAPF-accredited fest for commercial feature films, now in 20th yr. Audiences estimated at over 200,000; last yr more than 100,000 viewed films. Concurrent closed-circuit TV program, Festovizia, incl. interviews, film clips, etc. Format: 35mm. Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Nevena Djonlic, managing dir., Belgrade International Film Festival, Sava Centar, M. Popovica, 9, 11070 Belgrade, Yugoslavia; tel: 438-392.

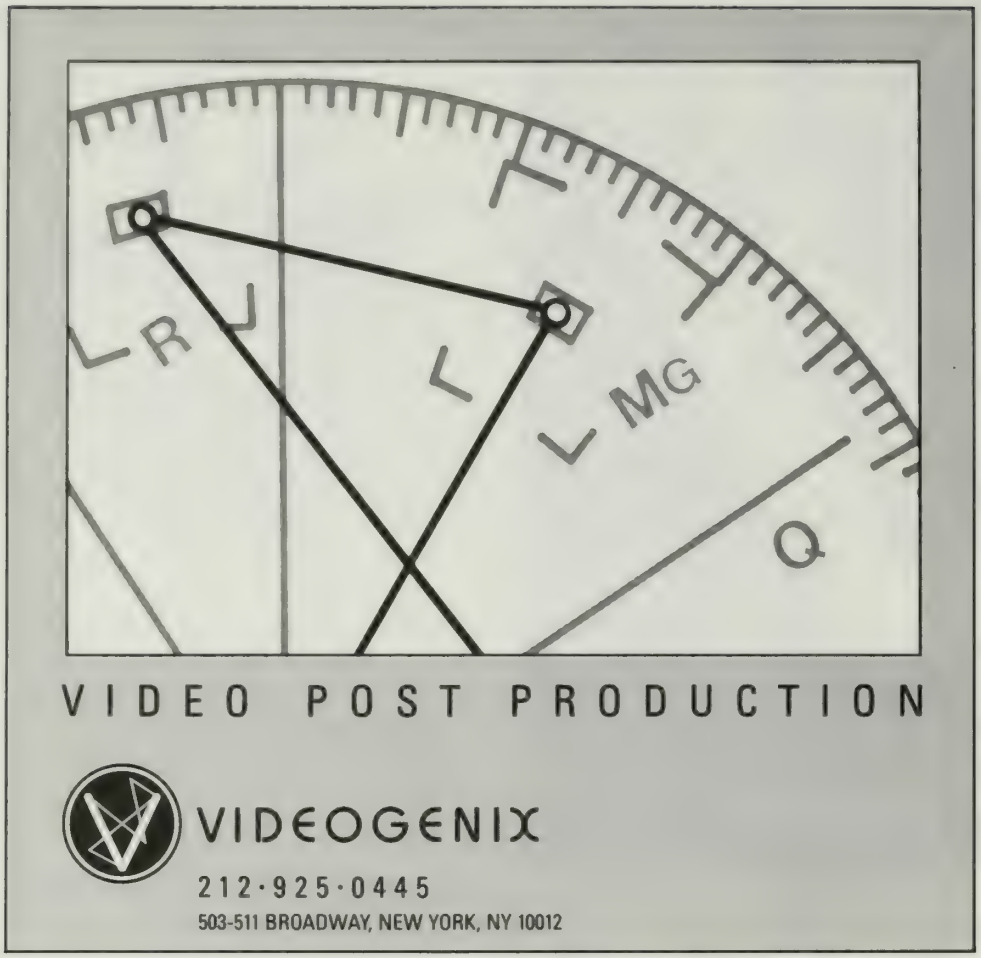
BONN INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF SHORT FILMS (EXPERI 89), Dec. 7-10, W. Germany. Now in 11th yr, alternative ind. fest for short films (under 20 min.) accepts work of any genre, format & theme. Entries over 30 min. & videos (PAL only) accepted in exceptional cases, but will not be part of competition. Competition consists of 14 programs of 9 hrs. collective length. Screening fee of 3DM/min. paid. Spectators' jury & critics' jury award 2 prizes of 1000DM ea. & Fuji-Kine-Film prize of film



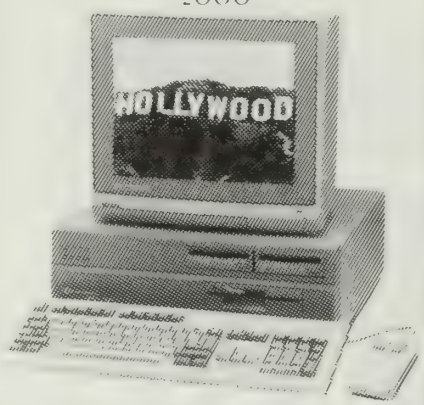







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stock. Formats: 70mm, 35mm, 16mm, super 8. Deadline: Oct. 27. Contact: Bonner Kinemathek e.V., Kreuzstr. 16, D-5300 Bonn 3, W. Germany; tel: (0228) 469721.

BRUSSELS INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF SUPER 8 FILM & VIDEO. November, Belgium. 6 day major int'l competitive super 8 & nonprofessional video gathering, now in 11th yr, open to all cats. No entry fee. Besides competition, program incl. retros, discussions; last yr's program featured collaboration w/ Millennium Film Workshop, Collective for Living Cinema & Exit Art. Formats: super 8, 8mm video, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Oct. 27. Contact: Robert Malengreau, general delegate, Brussels International Super 8 Film & Video Festival, Rue P.E. Janson, 12, 1050 Brussels, Belgium; tel: (02) 649 3340.

CINEMA DU REEL. Mar. 10-18, France. Sociological & ethnographical docs featured in this int'l competitive program, held since 1979. 20-25 recent works shown twice in competition (all selections must be subtitled in French). This yr features special program on doc films from India. Prizes: Prix Cinéma du Réel (50,000FF); Prix du Court métrage-short films (10,000FF); Prix des Bibliothèques (30,000FF). Work must have been completed btwn Jan. 1988 & Dec. 31, 1989. Do not send cassettes until requested; entry forms forwarded to participants only after preliminary info received. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 8mm. Deadline: Nov. 1. Contact: Suzette Glenadel, Déléguée Générale, Bureau du Festival Cinéma du Réel, 19 rue Beaubourg, Bibliothèque publique d'information, Centre Georges Pompidou, 75191 Paris Cedex 04, France; tel: 42 77 12 33; telex: CNAC GP 212726; fax: 42 77 72 41.

CRETEIL INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S FILM FESTIVAL. March, France. World's oldest fest of films by women, now major showcase for new work, held in Paris suburb. Attracts audiences reaching 35,000, incl. several thousand filmmakers, journalists, distributors & buyers & inspires controversial & critical discussions. Over 150 films shown, incl. competitive section for 15 narrative features, 15 feature docs & 30 shorts. All films shown 3 times. Special programs this yr incl. portrait of actress Claudia Cardinale, tribute to "grand reporter" Louise Weiss, tribute to pioneers of women's cinema, retro of Astrid Henning-Jensen or Gillian Armstrong, panorama of cinema by Latin American & Latina women. Cash & equipment prizes: 10,000FF prix du public in each cat & 2 jury prizes of 5,000FF to feature films.

This yr's US preselection will again be made at FIVF by fest rep. Jackie Buet. Films must be directed or co-directed by women, completed since March 1, 1988 & not theatrically released in France, broadcast on French TV, or shown at other French film festivals. Student productions ineligible. All subjects, genres & styles considered. Fest pays for accommodations (3 days) for participating filmmakers, as well as round-trip shipping for films selected through FIVF. Films should have French translation, synopsis & publicity & bio materials. Fest format: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 16mm, 3/4" & 1/2". Entry fee: $15/submission, payable to FIVF. Deadline: Nov. 15. For appl. or info, send SASE or contact Kathryn Bowser, FIVF Festival Bureau, 625 Broadway, 9th fl., New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400.

FANTASPORTO. February, Portugal. 10th anniv. of competitive fest for sci-fi & fantasy films that "seek new forms & methods of filmmaking in which the creative powers of the imagination have a treatment of quality." Program, held in northern industrial city of Porto, incl. int'l competition, showing of masterpieces of fantasy

films, retros & discussions on manifestations of fantasy & supernatural in human mind. Features & shorts produced in previous 3 yrs accepted; all entries in competitive must be Portuguese premieres. Prizes (trophies) awarded to best film, direction, actor/actress, screenplay, special FX, short; special award given to film whose "artistic & technical aspects present high level of originality." All participating films receive certificate. Over 60,000 tickets sold last yr to primarily Portuguese audiences. Format: 35mm. Deadline: Nov. 30. Contact: Festival Internacional de Cinema Fantástico do Porto-Fantasporto, Rua Diogo Brandão, 87, 4000 Porto, Portugal; tel: 32 07 59.

GÖTEBORG FILM FESTIVAL, Jan. 26-Feb. 4, Sweden. Noncompetitive fest, now in 12th yr, ranks as leading int'l film event in Scandinavia. Program consists mainly of films seen at other int'l fests or previewed on cassette; all lengths, formats, genres & subjects welcomed. Several Scandinavian film journalists & distributors attend; over 110 films have found distributors through fest. 62,000 tickets sold last yr to 102 film entries. Entries must be Swedish premieres (except home video). Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on 1/2" (PAL). Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Gunnar Carlson, dir., Göteborg Film Festival, Box 7079, S-402 32 Göteborg, Sweden; tel: 31-41 05 46; telex: 28764 FIFEST S; fax: 31-41 00 63.

HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, April, Hong Kong. 14th yr of large, 2-wk, noncompetitive event which annually screens over 140 films from 30 countries in 6 venues, in int'l (w/ 60 features), Asian & Hong Kong sections. Program also incl. retros & homages. Entries should be Hong Kong premieres. Features, shorts, docs & animated works selected. Fest invites filmmakers of participating US films, w/ various levels of hospitality. Sponsored by Urban Council of Hong Kong. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Albert Lee, dir., Hong Kong International Film Festival, Festivals Office, Hong Kong Coliseum Annex Bldg., Parking Deck Fl., KCR Kowloon Sta., 8 Cheong Wan Rd., Kowloon, Hong Kong; tel: 3-642217; telex: 38484 USDHK HX.

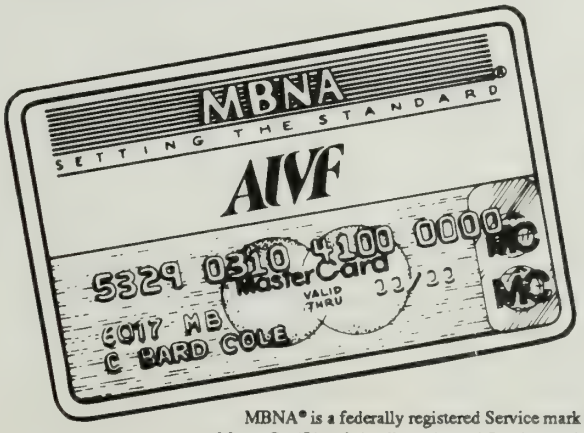
MAX OPHULS PRIZE FILM FESTIVAL, January, W. Germany. Competitive fest celebrated 10th anniversary last yr. Awards various prizes of DM5,000-25,000 to "new generation" filmmakers, chosen from finalist list of films produced in preceding yr. Contact: Albrecht Stuby, dir.; Berliner Promenade 7, 6600 Saarbruecken, W. Germany; tel: (0681) 39 92 97.

ROTTERDAM INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, January, The Netherlands. Known for tradition of congeniality & interaction between filmmakers, fest has traditionally enjoyed strong public support. Under guidance of late director/founder Hubert Bals, fest became leading int'l noncompetitive showcase for ind. film (experimental docs, 3d World features, US independents, European avant-garde), showing well over 100 films each yr. Plans are to continue this tradition. Last yr's program, tribute to Bals, attended by audiences of 160,000, w/ more than 300 foreign guests. Program featured new films chosen by directors supported by Bals. Concurrent Cinemart, 4-day ind. film market, incl. special projects section (devoted to uncompleted films needing further financing, as well as special fund for script development). Formats: 35mm, 16mm. New director Marco Müller, formerly of Pesaro Film Festival, will be in NY in mid-Oct. to collaborate w/ NY liaison Wendy Lidell in selection of films; call for info ASAP. Contact: Wendy Lidell, International Film Circuit, 383 Lafayette St., #303, New York, NY 10003; (212) 475-8237; fax: (212) 529-5328. Fest address: Film Festival Rotterdam, Box 21696, 3001 AR Rotterdam, The Netherlands; tel: (010) 4118080; telex: 21378 filmf nl; fax: (010) 413 5132.

10 MINUTE FILMS CAMPAIGN/TOKYO INTERNATIONAL PEACE FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, October, Japan. This is global campaign begun last yr to make doc & narrative films for peace, called by coalition of concerned filmmakers & citizens in Japan, US & Soviet Union & aiming for participation from several countries. Films will be part of Int'l Peace Film & Video Festival in Tokyo in 1990; fest will incl. showing of all films from campaign, int'l competition for short films/videos completed after 1986; peace & other prizes awarded by int'l jury, showings of classic films about peace & war, symposia on topics such as world peace & film. Theme for 1st yr is Peace & Disarmament, Peace & Love; future themes are nuclear weapons, military bases, modern war, justice, human rights, racial discrimination, hunger, poverty, or environmental destruction. Each participating film must be under 20 min. (1 min. for animation). Every country will have committee responsible for organizing & fundraising; US committee incl. Haskell Wexler, Charles Benton & Marjorie Benton. Will select 1-3 film projects, to be completed w/in 12 mos. Send ideas for peace films (synopsis or outline) to Tokyo by Dec. 31; winning entries accepted for production. Contact: Tsutomu Iwakura, dir. general, Japan Peace Museum, Shiba 1-4-9, Minato-ku, Tokyo, 105, Japan; tel: (03) 454-5859; telex: J33609 JAPAX; fax: 3-454-9800.


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## Renee Tajima

Small format video has revolutionized the possibilities for gathering footage, especially in difficult, fast-moving, and dangerous situations like combat. Los Angeles-based Pamela Cohen and Monona Wali are among the new generation of social-issue media producers testing the boundaries of small format for creating professional-quality productions. Their work-in-progress, the 60-minute tape **Maria's Story**, is a coproduction with Great Britain's Channel Four slated for both theatrical and television release later this year. In it, Cohen and Wali profile the life of a Salvadoran *campesina* who has reached beyond the traditional role of rural wife and mother to become a community organizer in the war zones. Maria Seranno and her family left their hometown in 1981, fleeing the repression of the National Guard headquartered next door. Since then, the mother of three has devoted her life to social and economic justice, eventually becoming a political leader in the guerilla forces of the FMLN. Cohen, Wali, and videographer John Knoop sneaked behind the lines to guerrilla-controlled territory in northern El Salvador. Carrying two Sony top-of-the-line video 8 cameras—and charging batteries with portable solar chargers—they followed Maria on foot through the war-ravaged countryside, dodging army surveillance planes, helicopters, and an hour-long mortar attack. The producers, who are collaborating with San Francisco-based Catherine Ryan, plan to bump the video 8 footage to Betacam and master the program on one-inch. An eight-minute pilot is currently being circulated for fundraising purposes. *Maria's Story*: Camina Film Projects, Box 291575, Los Angeles, CA 90029; (213) 461-7305.

Another southern California videomaker, Eames Demetrios, is in the process of editing **An Oral History of 1988**. This time-lapse portrait of a year in the life of the United States involves interviews with 30 individuals, filmed every three weeks for an entire year. The subjects, who vary in their political views, racial backgrounds, and age, speak about their lives and the events of the day. They come from all walks of life, from a homeless woman to a Christmas tree farmer, a lesbian separatist, and a member of the John Birch Society. Over the production period, a construction worker completes a 17-story building, a woman gives birth, and a housewife protests *The Last Temptation of Christ*. Demetrios plans to create an eight-hour video tapestry, from over 700 hours of material he shot. The tape is sponsored by the San Francisco-based Film Arts Foundation.



**Small format video was helpful in going behind guerrilla lines in El Salvador with political organizer Maria Serrano, here with her youngest daughter, Minita, for the 60-minute video *Maria's Story*, by Pamela Cohen, Monona Wali, and Catherine Ryan.**

Courtesy videomakers

*An Oral History of 1988*: Eames Demetrios, Box 142, Santa Monica, CA 90406; (213) 396-5991.

Director-producer Peter Walsh has completed production on **Insert Commercial Here**, an experimental 16mm short based on the poem *It's Another Day*, by Sandie Castle. In it, actors Janel Bosies and Tony Tsendeas appear in a theatrical sequence juxtaposed with hand-scratched animation, collaged images and sounds, and other live-action segments created by the filmmaker with cinematographer Sharon Walsh. The Baltimore crew shot the film during the past summer and are currently in postproduction, with a scheduled release date of February 1990. Walsh's last film, the three-minute *Picture of Me*, won prizes at the Ann Arbor Film Festial and Baltimore's Sowebohemia Festival. *Insert Commercial Here*: Khameleon Film and Video, 1536 William St., Baltimore, MD 21230; (301) 539-0867.

Boston-based producer Nancy Cohen has recently completed a new tape, **The Water Talks to Me**, with the help of a number of local funders, including the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities, the Cape Ann Commercial Fisherman's Loan Fund, the Gloucester Arts and Humanities Council, Kyler Seafoods, and the Somerville Arts Council. The half-hour documentary provides an intimate look at the traditional fishing community of Gloucester, now in the midst of change. Through interviews and scenes of daily life, it shows how declining fish populations affect fishermen, both at sea and at home; and includes super 8 footage shot by the men who appear on camera. The recollections of older fishermen, combined with archival footage, give a historical perspective to this multi-layered view of family and economics, environment and politics. The tape is narrated by Noah Adams of National Public Radio and was made with production support provided by the M.I.T. Sea Grant Program and Cambridge Television Productions. *The Water Talks to Me*: Diverse Productions, Box 519, Cambridge, MA 02238; (617) 776-7072.

Water and the environment is the subject of Lynn Corcoran's new documentary **Testing the Waters**, a 57-minute film now being distributed by Bullfrog Films. The setting is the Niagara River, world famous for its magnificent Falls, but now threatened by toxic chemical wastes. Hazardous wastes enter the river from industrial plants and the underground leakage of vast chemical waste dumps—a source more insidious and difficult to control. The area around Niagara Falls, which includes the infamous Love Canal, is said to have the largest concentration of leaking hazardous waste dumps in North America. *Testing the Waters* recounts a decade-long process, beginning with public recognition of the problem, the search for solutions, and, finally, the beginning of the clean-up. The film received a Cine Golden Eagle and was produced with funds from the New York State Council on the Arts and the New York Foundation for the Arts, as well as private foundations. *Testing the Waters* is the third in Corcoran's series of documentaries examining how the Love Canal community has responded to a broad range of environmental pollution issues. The first, *In Our Own Backyard* (1983), and *Waste* (1985) are also available for sale and rental from Bullfrog. *Testing the Waters*: Bullfrog Films, Oley, PA 19547; (800) 543-FROG.

# CLASSIFIEDS

*The Independent*'s **Classifieds** column includes all listings for "Buy • Rent • Sell," "Freelancers" & "Postproduction" categories. It is restricted to members only. Each entry has a **250 character limit** & costs **$20 per issue.** Ads exceeding this length will be edited. Payment must be made at the time of submission. Anyone wishing to run a classified ad more than once must pay for each insertion & indicate the number of insertions on the submitted copy. Each classified ad must be typed, double-spaced & worded exactly as it should appear.

Deadlines for **Classifieds** will be respected. These are the 8th of each month, **two months** prior to the cover date, e.g., October 8 for the December issue. Make check or money order—no cash, please—payable to FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.

## Buy • Rent • Sell

FOR SALE: Mint condition video pkg: Sony DXC-M3A video camera w/ Fujinon 12x9 Berm 88 lens, Sony 4800 deck, Sachtler tripod, Desisti lighting kit, Sennheiser ME-80 mic, Sony ECM lav, batteries, charger & more! Best offer. (718) 626-4433.

FOR SALE: Ikegami HL 83 w/ Cannon J13xNB3, low hrs., w/ hd road case: $6500. Sony BVU 110 w/ TC and portabrace bag, good working condition: $2000. Angenieux 9.5mm-95mm zoom lens w/ CA-1 mount: $800. Call Victor (212) 732-4587.

FOR SALE: Sony 3/4" Editing Suite-Lab use only-Sony 5850, 5800: $6500. Convergence ECS90 w/ extra Type 5 interface: $1500. Sony VTR 5600: $1000. Call Victor (212) 732-4587. Wanted to Trade or Buy: (2) JVC interface for ECS90.

DIGITAL Sony PCMF1 w/ RTX interface & Sony SLR2000 VTR: $2000. (2) Sony PCM-1 A/D-interface $400 ea. Tascam ATR60 1/2" 8-track, New w/ cards: $5000. Crown SX822 1/4" 2-trk, Mint: $800. Technics 10A02 2-trk: $1000. Victor (212) 732-4587.

AKG 451 w/CK1, CK8: $500. AKG D12-200. Beyer160: $250. Sennheiser ME40, ME80, (5) K3U, (4) MKE 10-3: $1000. Lamb Mixer PLM 422 w/ LPS10-24A: $200. Tascam 5 w/ case: $400. MAC/1900 receiver: $450. Crown VFX crossover: $225. Shure M67: $50. (212) 732-4587.

FOR SALE: Ashly SC68-Notch Filter: $150. Ashly SC-55 Compression limiter: $150. Buren Dynamic Noise Filter: $100. Audio Wireless mike (old model) 170.3: $300. Call Victor (212) 732-4587.

FOR SALE: Moviola 6-plate flatbed 16mm editing tables, M77 $4000, M86 $5000, or best offer. John (617) 696-0231.

FOR SALE: Sony BVO 110 Portable 3/4" Video Recorder. Excellent condition. Minimum hours on unit. AC Adapter included. $1400 (203) 358-9559.

NAGRA IV-S for sale. Stereo Nagra with internal crystal, universal mic preamps, external 59.94 crystal, synchronizer, and AC power supply. Call Filmspace, Inc. (800) 346-8615.

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FOR SALE: CP16R Crystal Sync Camera, w/ Ultra T lenses: 9, 12.5, 16 & 25mm; AC Hook-up; two 400' Mags.; Halliburton Camera Case. $3,800. Call Jerome (718) 441-4793.

FOR SALE: 16mm Doco film pkg. CP 16 w/ Angenieux 12-120mm lens, C-mount adapter & extra lenses, 2 mags, 2 batts w/ chargers, Haliburton case, Miller tripod & head, Nagra III (crystal) Lowell light kit, accessories. $3,800. Andrew Phillips (212) 675-4218.

FOR SALE: Bolex H. 16 SBM with metallic case, Angenieux Zoom type 10x12c F12-1.20mm with case. Tripod, motor, battery and other lenses, 17mm and F2.7. Call (718) 802-0559.

FOR SALE: Sony BVP-330, Broadcast quality, 3 Plumbicon tubes, 600 lines resolution; w/ Fujinon 14x, 9.5-133. Sony BVU-110, 3/4" tape deck w/ batteries & cables. Great value! Very little used, very good deal. Call Claudio at (212) 664-8009.

WANTED & FOR SALE: Wanted: used Betacam (camera/deck), M7, M2 format camera and deck, or IKE-79 camera. For sale or trade: 2860/2260 3/4" edit system w/ ECS 90 controller for $1800/best offer (Must sell). Gary: (212) 768-1600 day or nite.

FOR RENT: Brand new Sony 5850, 5800, RM 440 3/4" off-line editing system. Convenient location. Very reasonable values. Call Jane at (212) 929-4795.

FOR SALE: Audio Ltd. RMS 12 wireless mic system, $1050. Audio Ltd. RMS 14 dual wireless mic syst. $2000. Audio Ltd. wireless access.: power supplies, RF splitter, etc., $200. Pkg, $3100. Lectrosonics VHF Pro series wireless mic syst., $1050. L. Loewinger (212) 226-2429.

FOR SALE: Steenbeck high-speed 6-plate flatbed with trim bins, rewinds, gangsynchronizer, block splicer, plus other accessories. $12,500. Call (212) 580-6267.

1,000 SQUARE FEET: Radio Wave Bldg. Bright, attractive, a/c office space. Separate ent. 3 yr. sublease. Also ind. office, short term. Linda Stern (212) 594-1414 Bernstein Sales & Leasing.

VIDEO PRODUCTION PKG for sale. JVC KY 2700 camera w/ 2 bats & ac; BVU 100 w/ tc gen, porta case, 2 bats & ac; 2 lavs; 1 Nakamichi shot gun mic; Shure M67; Miller fluid head; good condition. $3000 or b.o. Erik Lewis Productions (718) 965-0268.

MOVIOLA PORTABLE 6-plate flatbed 16mm editing table. Incl. 3 mag heads. About 8 years old, used very little. $4500 or b.o. Philip Jamison, III, 17 Sharon Alley, West Chester, PA 19382; (215) 696-8449.

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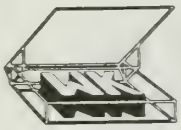
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TRANSCRIPT SPECIALIST: Transcripts from audio tapes, speedy turn-around, specializing in documentary. References: Kevin Rafferty (*Atomic Cafe*), Robert Stone (*Radio Bikini*). $2.50/page. Disk copies available. Call for arrangements. (407) 645-2638.

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BOOKKEEPING: High quality bookkeeping services for small businesses. We start up, customize and maintain your books with support and continuity. Call Gari (718) 743-5619. References.

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SOUND RECORDIST: Film and video. Have own equipment. Also cargo van w/ commercial plates. Michael Karas (201) 744-6450.

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WRITER: Accomplished young journalist avail. for documentary projects (pre and postproduction). Will work at no fee for the right staff/project in exchange for hands-on experience in all phases: research, scripting, rewriting, editing, etc. Teri (914) 693-5323.

WANTED: Asst Producers (& PAs) for video movies in Hamptons, E. Village, Soho. Exp. in on-line edit, company mgmnt or mktng. For PA: exp. in sound/light. Cast working for shares. Funding expected Oct. David Shepherd: (516) 329-2067 or (212) 777-7830.

CINEMATOGRAPHER and soundperson to work on independent films. Alina/Vincent (718) 729-7481. Reel upon request. Long Live Independence!

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## FIVF THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the foundation affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent producer community, including publication of *The Independent*, maintenance of the Festival Bureau, seminars and workshops, an information clearinghouse, and a grant making program. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the following agencies, foundations and organizations: The New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fund, the Beldon Fund, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Consolidated Edison Company of New York, the Benton Foundation, and the Funding Exchange.

# NOTICES

**Notices** are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. *The Independent* reserves the right to edit for length.

Deadlines for **Notices** will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, two months prior to cover date, e.g., October 8 for the December issue. Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

## Conferences • Workshops

6TH NAT'L ASSN. OF ARTISTS' ORGANIZATIONS CONFERENCE: Held Oct. 11-15, hosted by Intermedia Arts-Minneapolis at Hennepin Ctr for the Arts, 528 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55403. Focus on censorship in the arts. Travel subsidies available for NAAO members. Contact: NAAO, 1007 D St., NE, Washington, DC 20002.

GOETHE HOUSE-NY workshop, "The Regional State Film Subsidy System: A Model for the US?," moderated by George Stoney. Free admission. Presented in cooperation with AIVF and New York University, October 28-29 at NYU, 721 Broadway, New York City. Part of Goethe House exhibition Ruhrworks: The Arts of a German Region. For information: (212) 972-3960.

HOW DO I LOOK? A CONFERENCE ON LESBIAN & GAY MEDIA: Speakers incl. Teresa de Lauretis, Richard Fung, Stuart Marshall, Judith Mayne, Kobena Mercer & Cindy Patton. Organized by the Bad Object Choices, cosponsored by Collective for Living Cinema & Anthology Film Archive. Oct. 21-22, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Free registration. Contact: Anthology Film Archive, 32-34 2nd Ave. (corn. 2nd St.), New York, NY; (212) 505-5181.

INDIES, ISSUES & VIDEOTAPE: "Distribution in the '90s," day-long conference sponsored by Media Network scheduled for Oct. Specific date & location t.b.a. Event will bring together producers, distributors, funders & media users to present case histories in distrib., new initiatives in audience development & updates on new technologies. Focus on problems facing issue-oriented media. Contact: Kevin Duggan, Media Network, 121 Fulton St., 5th fl., New York, NY 10038; (212) 619-3455.

PROFESSIONAL VIDEO TRAINING PROGRAM at Borough of Manhattan Community College offers free courses. Program trains members of several film union locals, plus minority & women media professionals in basic & advanced video editing & basic & advanced computer graphics. PROVIT also offers seminars on lighting for TV, managing small businesses for media freelancers, video engineering for nonengineers & others. Call (212) 618-1387.

SOUTHWEST ALTERNATE MEDIA PROJECT's 3rd annual Independent Images Conference, October 18-22, in Dallas, TX, promoting the art & business of feature filmmaking in the Southwest. Contact: IIC3, SWAMP, 1519 West Main, Houston, TX 7706; (713) 522-8592.

UNION FOR DEMOCRATIC COMMUNICATIONS: "Grassroots Communications for Democratic, Social, Cultural & Political Change," 1989 annual conference. Held at Hunter & Marymount Manhattan Colleges, NYC, Oct. 26-29. Contact: Mark Schulman, UDC conference coord., City College of NY, Dept. of Communications, Film & Video, 138 St. & Convent Ave., New York, NY 10031.

WRITERS GUILD OF AMERICA, EAST is sponsoring 1-day symposium "Writing Pictures to Persuade: The Informational Film Market," October 19. Covers business of writing film, video & audiovisuals for companies, government & nonprofit institutions. For information, contact: WGA, 333 W. 57th St., New York, NY 10019; (212) 245-6180.

## Films • Tapes Wanted

DISTRIBUTOR SEEKS NEW TITLES: Zenger Video, nat'l distributor of educ. videos to high schools, elementary & middle schools, libraries & colleges, looking for new titles. Seeks high quality programs dealing w/ current issues, literature, historical topics & anything of value in the classroom. Send submissions (3/4", 1/2", or 16mm) to: Robin Wales, Zenger Video, 10200 Jefferson Blvd., Culver City, CA 90232; (213) 839-2436, ext. 48.

INDEPENDENT PRODUCER seeking films & tapes up to 60 min. long. Submissions must be 3/4" or 1/2" videotape, U-matic for viewing purposes. Also incl. SASE w/ postage for return. Selected projects will be cablecast in select markets. No pay, fee, honorarium, or financial reward of any kind. Send to: Stephan Kessler Prods, Inc., 314 W. 90th St., Ste. 2F, New York, NY 10024.

## Opportunities • Gigs

CURATOR, film & performance. Deadline: Oct. 15. ICA, 955 Boylston, Boston, MA 02115; (617) 266-5152.

DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY TV announces Artist-in-Residency program, which provides technical assistance to NYS artists & community orgs. Submit 2-3 pg proposal describing project, target audience & equipment requirements. Postproduction & prod. facilities provided for all accepted proposals. People of color encouraged to apply. Contact: Community Director, DCTV, 87 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 966-4510.

FILM/VIDEO ARTS seeks applicants for Internship Program. Interns offered free media classes & access to F/VA equip. & facilities in exchange for 15 hrs/wk intern work. Film & video exp helpful. Minorities & women encouraged to apply. Send resumé, incl. all skills, abilities & work exp, w/ brief letter describing artistic objectives, hopes for internship. Indicate days & hrs. avail. Also seeks instructors in Screenwriting, Lighting for Film & Video, Intro to Digital Effects, Basic Doc Video Prod., Director's Wkshp, Bdcst Camera, Film Prod. & Video Technology. No calls, write only to: Peggy Carol, Media Traning Coord., F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003-4797.

FUNDRAISER/COPRODUCER wanted by NYC/Wash. DC-based nonprofit progressive peace & environmental org. to raise funds to: 1) help produce TV benefit special to generate funds for environmental & peace movements & 2) promote upcoming award-winning PBS special. No prod. experience necessary. Salary & com-


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mission negotiable, plus free use of b'cast prod. equip. for own projects. Prefer someone w/ own contacts, but trainee also considered. Letter/resume: Arms Race Education Project c/o IDEAL, 1026 6th Ave., NYC 10018; (212) 768-1600.

INSTRUCTOR needed for innovative program in 2nd yr. at Lower East Side public school w/ 9th grade special educ. students. Creative, committed, mature professional who enjoys working w/ teens needed to co-lead students through preprod. planning, shooting & editing. Ability to teach VHS camera & editing necessary. 1 afternoon (1-5 pm) per wk for school yr. Editing at DCTV. Student work put into half-hr bdcst on local PBS station. Chance to help create an excellent program. Send resume to: Maureen Lynch, 1192 First Ave., New York, NY 10021.

PENN STATE, School of Communications: Tenure-track position at asst or assoc. level in film & video production. Qualifications: independent filmmaker w/ strong background in cinematography, proven teaching ability & ability to contribute to broad intellectual & creative life of interdisciplinary communications school. Salary appropriate to qualifications. Starting date: Fall 1990. Appl. deadline: Nov. 1, 1989. Send letter, professional & academic resume & names of 3 references to: Jeff Rush, Film and Video Program, School of Communications, Penn State University, Box E, 201 Carnegie Building, University Park, PA 16802. EEO employer.

SEEKING TO FORM COLLECTIVE of writers, directors, videographers, designers, musicians, etc. Interested in joining w/ others disenchanted w/ commercial prod. world to combine talents & resources to establish group that would allow for the development of creative, profitable projects. Write: Freedom Unlimited, 90 5th Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11217.

## Publications

FOOTAGE 89, long-awaited guide to North American film & video archives & sources, now available from Prelinger Associates, 430 W. 14th St., New York, NY 10014; (800) 243-2254 or (212) 633-2134.

FOUNDATION CENTER has just published *Foundation Fundamentals for Nonprofit Organizations*, outlining basics of how to research foundation grants & steps necessary to prepare & target grant proposals effectively. $19.95 plus $2 shipping & handling. Contact: Foundation Center, 79 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10003.

## Resources • Funds

ALASKA STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS Artist Fellowship deadline: Oct. 7; Project Grant deadline: Nov. 1. Contact: ASCA, 619 Warehouse Ave., Ste. 220, Anchorage, AK 99501-1682; (907) 279-1558.

CANADA COUNCIL VIDEOTAPE FUND program: Ind professional video artists & video access & prod. centers eligible for up to 6 hr of blank videotape each yr. Projects may be doc., drama, conceptual, video installation, or experimental w/ priority to prod. projects. Projects must not have previous support of Canada Council grant unless through Workshops Program of Media Arts Section. Contact: Jean Gagnon, Media Arts Officer; (613) 598-4356.

COMMUNITY FILM WORKSHOP: 1989 Build Illinois Filmmakers Grants now available to IL filmmakers who are current CFW members & working on noncommercial, noninstructional 16mm film projects. Appl. deadline: Nov. 1. Contact: CFW, 1130 S. Wabash Ave., Ste. 400, Chicago, IL 60605; (312) 427-1245.

ELECTRONIC ARTS GRANTS provides finishing funds up to $500 to NYS artists for completion of audio or videotapes, computer-based sound or image works & exhibits & small number of research projects aimed at advancing electronic arts. 3 appl. cycles/yr. Also, presentation funds of small amounts to NYS nonprofits to assist w/ presentation of audio, video & related electronic art. 4 review cycles/yr. Contact: Sherry Miller Hocking, Electronic Arts Grants Program, Experimental TV Ctr., 180 Front St., Owego, NY 13827; (607) 687-4341.

INTERMEDIA ARTS MEDIA ARTS Production Awards of equipment & facilities use to artists working in video, electronic music, computer graphics, animation & performance. Awards based on submitted proposals for creation or production of whole or partial projects. 6-10 awards/yr. Appl. deadline: Nov. 1. Indiv. emerging or prof. artists or groups of collaborating artists eligible, w/ no residential requirements. Intermedia Arts & Dayton's Videowall Commissioning Project offer $3,000 commission & up to $2,500 for prod. expenses to 2 artists working individually or collaboratively for creation, prod. & exhibition in 32-screen videowall. Access to Intermedia Arts equip. & postprod. facilities & Dayton's Studio 11 postprod. facilities to be negotiated. Deadline: Nov. 15. Contact: Intermedia Arts, 425 Ontario St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 627-4444.

MARGOLIS/BROWN ADAPTORS offers video editing & postprod. subsidies for artistic video projects other than performance documentation & promo tapes. Contact: Margolis/Brown Adaptors, 397 Bridge St., 2/F, Brooklyn, NY 11201; (212) 727-0157 or (718) 797-3930.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS: Deadlines: Radio Projects, Oct. 10; Film/Video Production, Nov. 13. Contact: Media Arts Program, NEA, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20506; (202) 786-0278.

NEW YORK COUNCIL FOR THE HUMANITIES: Speakers in the Humanities Program invites humanities scholars to submit proposals for incl. in program. Selected scholars may present up to 5 lectures annually & will receive $250 honorarium & travel reimbursement for ea. engagement. Appl. deadline: Oct. 13. Contact: Speakers Program, NYCH, 198 Broadway, 10th fl, New York, NY 10038.

NEW YORK FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS: Fellowships in Video deadline: Oct. 2. Contact: NYFA, 5 Beekman St., New York, NY 10038; (212) 233-3900.

NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS: Regrants for Community Arts Programs administered by Cultural Council Foundation. Avail. to community-based organizations in Manhattan seeking support for arts & cultural activities during 1990. Nonprofit orgs based in Manhattan that have not submitted appl. to NYSCA for FY90 eligible to apply for a Decentralization Grant. Contact: CCF, Decentralization Dept., 625 Broadway, 8th fl, New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-5660.

RHODE ISLAND STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS: Artist Development Grant, Artists Projects, Arts Programming & Org'l Development deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: RISCA, 95 Cedar St., Ste. 103, Providence, RI 02903.

SOUTH CAROLINA ARTS COMMISSION: Appl. deadlines: Artists Projects, Jan. 15. Contact: SCAC, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201.

STUDY ABROAD IN THE VISUAL ARTS: Fulbright & other grant opportunities for study abroad in film & video: Fulbright Grants, Lusk Memorial Fellowships, Annette Kade Fellowships & Miguel Vinciguerra Fellowships. Appl. deadline: Oct. 31. Contact: US Student Programs Div., Institute of Int'l Educ., 809 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017.

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE: Grants Program for scholarship, educ., training & public information in int'l peace & conflict mgmt. Appl. deadlines: Oct. 1, Feb. 1. Contact: US Institute of Peace, Grants Program, 1550 M St. NW, Ste 700, Washington, DC 20005-1708; (202) 457-1700; fax (202) 429-6063.

## Trims & Glitches

AIVF MEMBERS who won Apparatus Productions grants: Gregg Araki, *Totally Screwed Up* & Roddy Bogawa, *Some Divine Wind*. Congrats!

KUDOS to member winners of New Television Awards: Joseph Angio, *More than a Game*; Drew Browning & Annette Barbier, *Disabled Activists in Cuba*; Dan Curry, *Untitled*; Mirko Popadic, *Jobs & Justice*; Prajna Paramita Parasher, *I Left My Eyes Behind in Video Frames...* & Michael Rose, *Between the Bullet & the Lie*.

GREAT LAKES REGIONAL FELLOWSHIP awardees incl. AIVF members Joseph Angio, *More than a Game*; Fred Marx, *Hoop Dreams*; Scott Rankin, *This & That*; Stephen Roszell, *Rosa Mystica*; Diane Weyerman, *Dead Silence Screams*; Deanna Morse, *Signing*; Grayce Nance, *Granville T. Woods*; Barbara Roos, *Lights on the Lake*; Austin Allen, *Franklin Park*; Ann Alter, *No Need to Repent;* Tom Hayes & Riad Bahhur, *River of Courage*; Russ Johnson, *Finke's Wings* & Liz Mersky, *A Call to Rememberance*.

CONGRATS to Michal Aviad, *The Woman Next Door* & Timothy L. Hittle, *The Potato Hunter*, who have been awarded project development grants from the Film Arts Foundation Grants Program.

AIVF MEMBER WINNERS of 1989 Film in the Cities Regional Film/Video Grants are Robert Lawrence, *Park*; J. Leighton Pierce, *Singing from Memory*; Mark Kwok & Wah Tang, *It's Crazy to be Chinese in Minnesota*; Polly Lin, *At My Mother's Table*; Eric Mueller, *Twin Foil* & Barbra Nei & Judith Yourman, *Deconstructing Mom*. Congratulations!

KUDOS to Marcia Ogrodnik who, with partner Sarah Durham, earned a Nissan Focus Award.

CONGRATULATIONS to Will Hommeyer & Robert Lawrence, winners of Intermedia Arts Minnesota Grants for Interdisciplinary Artists.

AIVF MEMBERS who have been awarded Corporation for Public Broadcasting Open Solicitation funds incl. Suzie Baer, *Keeping Spirit*; Sylvia Morales & Jean Victor, *Faith Even to the Fire*; Catherine Tatge, *Beyond Hate*; Nina Rosenblum & William Miles, *The Liberators*; Stanley Nelson, *Curse or Cure—Methadone* & Renee Tajima & Christine Choy, *Fortune Cookies*. Congrats!

KUDOS to Ralph Arlyck, Louis Alvarez, Andrew Kolker, Helen DeMichiel, Deep Dish TV, Fred Wiseman, Daniel Eisenberg, Dan Curry & Pamela Falkenberg, Irving Saraf & Allie Light, Morgan Fisher, John Reilly, Shalom Gorewitz, Douglas Hall, Kayo Hatta, Kathryn High,

Louis Hock, Jill Godmilow, Jennie Livingston, Allen Moore, Errol Morris, Alan Berliner, Christian Pierce & Steffen Pierce, Kevin Rafferty, Ken Harrison & Julie Zando, winners of National Endowment for the Arts Media Arts Film/Video Production Grants.

BERENICE REYNAUD has been named one of two Rockefeller Foundation Fellows in the Humanities who will conduct research in the media arts at the Whitney Museum Film & Video Dept. Congrats!

SUNDANCE INSTITUTE June Filmmaker Lab projects incl. Jill Godmilow's *What We Talk about When We Talk about Love* & Steven Gomer/Calvin Skaggs' *Fly by Night*. Congratulations!

KUDOS to Dermot Begley, whose film *The Spirit of St. Elmo's Village* won the Public Awareness award in the Hometown USA Video Festival.

CONGRATS to Marcy Page, whose film *Paridisia* won the Grand Prize in Experimental Division of Houston Int'l Festival, 1st Place in Animation from Herland Film & Video Festival & 1st Place in Animation from Palo Alto Film Festival.

LYNN HERSHMAN received the Barbara Latham Video Award given by School of the Chicago Art Institute. Congratulations!

ALTERNATIVE VIEWS, Austin-based public access show, won the George Stoney Award for Humanistic Communications conferred by the Nat'l Federation of Local Cable Programmers. Kudos!

CONGRATULATIONS to Kathleen Sweeney & Jeffrey Marino, who earned awards for *The Crossroads* at Utah Short Film & Video Festival & Visions of US Video Competition.

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## AIVF MEMBERS' INSURANCE UPDATE

TEIGIT, the insurance group offering medical and life plans to AIVF members, has announced changes resulting from the steadily rising costs of insurance. As of September 1, 1989, **TEIGIT will discontinue its Medical "Plan 200"** with deductible set at $200 a year. The plan's underwriter, Connecticut General, has raised premium rates 86 percent for the next year, and it was agreed that the burden is too heavy to offer any benefit to AIVF members.

TEIGIT will continue to offer its Medical "Plan 1000" with an annual $1,000 deductible. While this plan requires a higher out-of-pocket payment prior to claim coverage, the premium rates are considerably cheaper than the "Plan 200." However, the rates for "Plan 1000" have been raised 12 percent beginning September 1, 1989.

AIVF shares the concern of independents about the soaring costs of insurance, which have hit freelance artists particularly hard. We will continue to offer our members the fairest, most reasonably priced plans we can find.

Other insurance news: AIVF is pleased to announce a new **Liability Insurance Program** for members, through the brokerage firm Coulter and Sands, for documentary productions budgeted at $100,000 or less. Also, TEIGIT has introduced a separate group term life insurance plan, with benefits up to $250,000 and no medical exam required to apply. For more information, call or write AIVF.

## SUMMARY OF THE MINUTES OF THE AIVF/ FIVF BOARD

At its meeting on June 24, 1989, the AIVF board approved a new membership benefit: a low-cost liability insurance plan for documentary projects budgeted for less than $100,000. The plan, offered by New York-based insurer Coulter and Sands, will provide comprehensive general liability coverage for bodily injury or property damage for an annual premium of $1,000.

The AIVF board also resolved to draft a letter to Congress expressing strong support for the National Endowment for the Arts' peer panel grant-making process in response to recent legislative proposals limiting that process and restricting certain grants.

Winding up some old business, the board rejected a new AIVF logo, but authorized a final effort to develop a new look for the organization. The board agreed to add additional regional correspondents to promote membership and channel news and information to *The Independent*. The board further resolved to review and update the association's advisory board. The board also approved AIVF and FIVF budgets for the 1989/90 fiscal year.

In staff reports, executive director Lawrence Sapadin reported that negotiations on the establishment of the new independent production service were progressing. Start-up is scheduled for October 1, 1989. *Independent* editor Martha Gever and managing editor Pat Thomson reported that the magazine has boosted pages to an average of 44 to 48 with the help of increased advertising sales. Festival bureau director Kathryn Bowser reported that she has arranged the screening of members' work for the Sydney, Melbourne, Parma (Italy), London, and other film festivals. Seminar/membership director Ethan Young provided an overview of the year's seminars and signalled an aggressive membership campaign for the coming year. Finally, finance/audio staffer Mort Marks reported that tape sales and other FIVF publishing projects have continued to grow.

AIVF/FIVF board meetings are public, and AIVF members are encouraged to attend and participate. Telephone for time and location of the next board meeting. For a copy of the full minutes of the above meeting, send a request with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: AIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012; (212) 473-3400.

## AIVF REGIONAL CORRESPONDENTS

AIVF has recently instituted a network of regional correspondents, who will provide membership information, hold meetings, and aid recruitment in areas of the country outside New York City. AIVF members are urged to contact them about AIVF-related needs and problems, about your activities, and other relevant information and news:

**Joyce Bolinger**, executive director
Center for New Television
912 S. Wabash, Chicago, IL 60605
(312) 427-5446

**Cheryl Chisolm**
2844 Engle Road, NW, Atlanta, GA 30318
(404) 792-2167

**Deanna Morse**
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**Barton Weiss**
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## AIVF ELECTS NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The results are in from the election of five members of AIVF's 1989 Board of Directors. Newly elected to seats on the 11-member board are Dee Davis, Jack Walsh, Barton Weiss, and Debra Zimmerman. Current board vice president Loni Ding was reelected for another two-year term.

Davis is executive producer for Appalshop Films in Whitesburg, Kentucky. In his nominating statement, he called for renewed advocacy to increase funding for independents from both public agencies and private institutions.

Ding, a San Francisco filmmaker and member of the California Council for the Humanities, called for "safeguards to ensure autonomy" for the new Independent Production Service for public television.

Walsh is a filmmaker who will be moving to California next year after serving as executive director of the Collective for Living Cinema in New York City. He expressed concern over the narrowing options for exhibition of work that challenges "the dominant forms of representation."

Weiss, director of the Dallas Video Festival and a film/videomaker, called for a change in AIVF's image to reflect the range of membership beyond "politically correct, NYC documentarians."

Zimmerman is director of the nonprofit distribution company Women Make Movies. In her statement, she warned that "current funding trends and programs are focusing on already established producers."

The three alternates, based on vote count, are producer and Atlanta Media Project president Julie Dash, documentary producer Samuel Sills of Brooklyn, and independent video producer David Shulman. Continuing their two-year terms are Skip Blumberg, Christine Choy, Dai Sil Kim-Gibson, Lourdes Portillo, Robert Richter, and Deborah Shaffer. Stepping down are Robert Aaronson, Adrianne Benton, Wendy Lidell, and Regge Life.

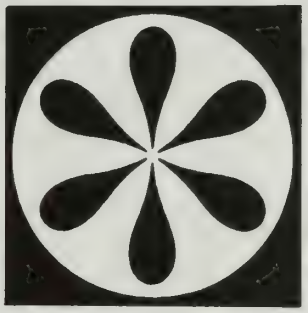
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Eugene Aleinikoff,* Skip Blumberg, Christine Choy, Dee Davis, Loni Ding, Lisa Frigand,* Dai Sil Kim-Gibson, Tom Luddy,* Lourdes Portillo, Robert Richter (president), Lawrence Sapadin (ex officio), Steve Savage,* Deborah Shaffer, Jack Walsh, Barton Weiss, John Taylor Williams,* Debra Zimmerman.

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COVER: In this issue, alternative media producers and programmers plan for the next decade, looking into useful models of cooperation and new kinds of networks—social and technological—while building on the lessons of the past in "Utopia Now: Networks for the Rest of Us." Changes ahead for cable access and media arts centers are also considered in "Allies or Antagonists? Public Access Cable and Media Arts Centers." Cover photograph is from San Diego videomaker Louis Hock's *Mexican Tapes*, an excerpt from which was included in the *Deep Dish TV* program *The Border: Where Do You Draw the Line?*. Photo courtesy Deep Dish TV.

# AN INDEPENDENT TV SERVICE IS BORN

In early September 1989, the National Coalition of Public Broadcasting Producers and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) concluded over nine months of negotiations concerning the new Independent Television Service (ITVS, previously referred to as the Independent Production Service or IPS). The establishment of ITVS fulfilled the provision in the 1988 Public Telecommunications Act authorizing the creation of an "independent production service." In the new law, Congress also provided for an additional $3-million to support minority programming on public broadcasting. These provisions in the legislation represent the culmination of a two-and-a-half year lobbying effort conducted by the Coalition, which is composed of representatives of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, the Association of California Independent Public Television Producers, and over 100 media centers and producer groups nationwide.

The incorporating papers for ITVS were filed in Washington, D.C., on September 22. This document, as well as a joint letter reciting agreements and understandings reached by the Coalition and CPB but not reflected in the articles of incorporation and the composition of the initial board of directors for ITVS, were the fruits of the series of meetings between CPB representatives and the Coalition's negotiating team, composed of Austin Allen, Linda Blackaby, Loni Ding, Hector Galan, Larry Hall, David Rice, Lawrence Sapadin, and Gail Silva.

The members of ITVS board of directors are:

**Linda Blackaby**, Director, Neighborhood Film and Video Project of the International House of Philadelphia, and Vice President, National Coalition of Public Broadcasting Producers

**Lawrence Daressa**, Codirector, California Newsreel, and Chair, National Coalition of Public Broadcasting Producers

## EXCERPT FROM THE ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE, INC.

THIRD: The corporation is hereby organized, in accordance with the Public Telecommunications Act of 1988, exclusively for charitable, educational, scientific and literary purposes, as follows:

(A) To contract with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting pursuant to the Public Telecommunications Act of 1988, on such terms and for such periods as may be mutually agreeable, for the production of public television programs by independent production entities.

(B) To develop and implement policies and practices designed to further the federal public broadcasting policy of encouraging the development of programming that involves creative risks and that addresses the needs of unserved and underserved audiences, particularly children and minorities.

(C) To commission, acquire, package (in a manner consistent with the antitrust laws of the United States), distribute and promote independently produced television programming, with all funds provided to the corporation by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to be used exclusively to expand the diversity and innovativeness of programming available to public broadcasting.

(D) To support programs that do not duplicate programming already available on public broadcasting or other telecommunications services, and to develop new audiences for independently produced programming and for public broadcasting generally.

(E) To establish and maintain policies which insulate the corporation's programming decisions from the pressures both of undue political influence and of marketplace forces; and specifically, neither to select nor to evaluate programs on the basis of suitability for corporate underwriting, or viewer subscription development, or the ability to attract sources of production funding other than through the corporation.

(F) To promote and advance the goals of diversity, innovation, excellence and artistic and editorial integrity in public broadcasting programming, and to foster the growth and development of independent media for public broadcasting.

(G) To promote maximum carriage within the public broadcasting system of the programs

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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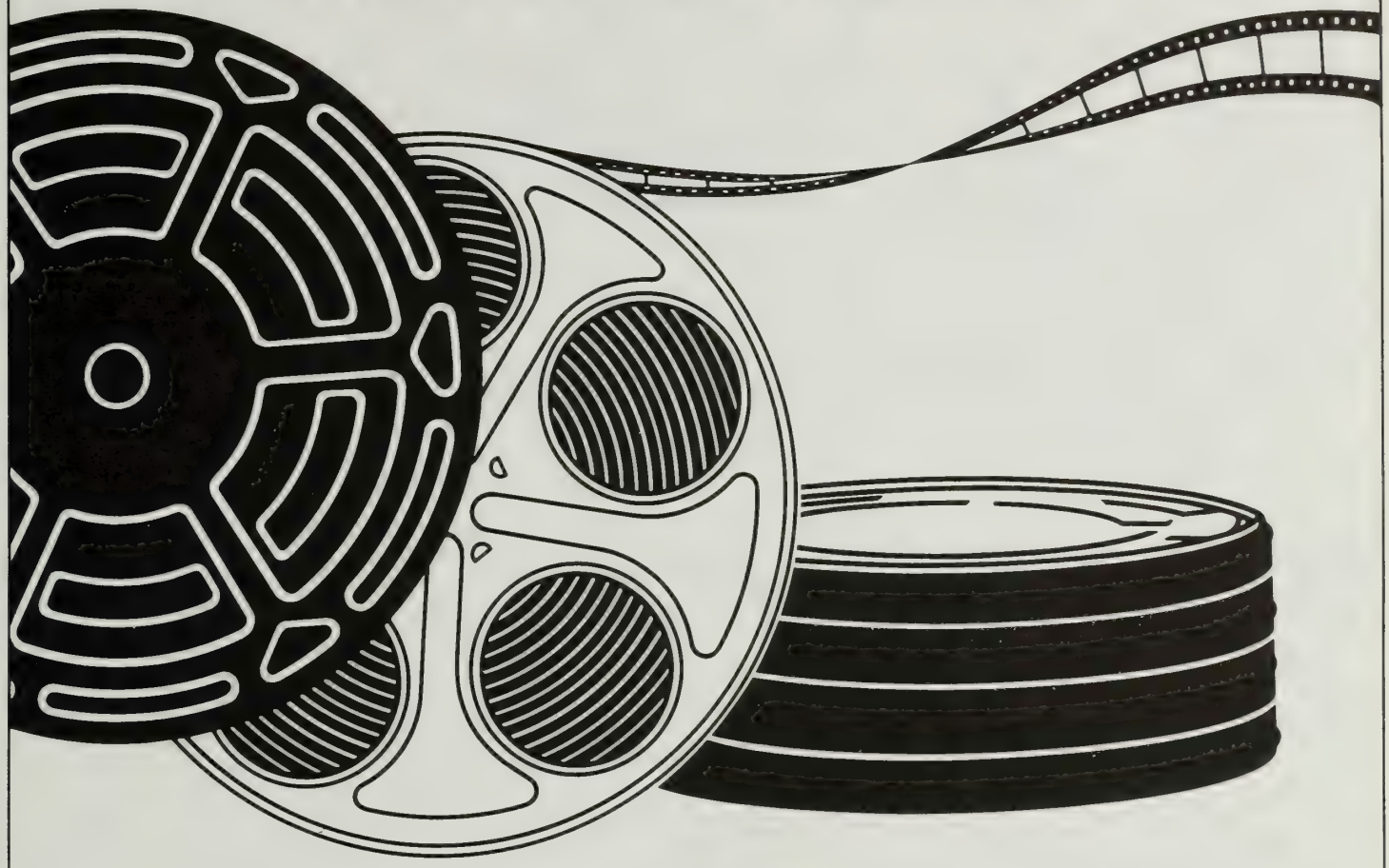
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**AIVF/FIVF STAFF MEMBERS:** Lawrence Sapadin, executive director; Ethan Young, membership/programming director; Kathryn Bowser, festival bureau director; Morton Marks, audio/business manager; Sol Horwitz, Short Film Showcase project administrator; Mary Jane Skalski, administrative assistant.

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**Virginia Gaines Fox**, Executive Vice President, Kentucky Educational Television Foundation, and President, Kentucky Educational Television Endowment

**Laurence S. Hall**, Legislative Affairs Coordinator, National Coalition of Public Broadcasting Producers

**Cheryl Head**, Vice President, Production and Community Development, WTVS-TV, Detroit, Channel 56

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

that the corporation funds.

(H) To foster an improved, cooperative working relationship between the independent production community and the public broadcasting system.

FIFTH: The manner of appointment of the directors of the corporation shall be as follows...

(C) Prior to the scheduled date of each annual meeting at which the terms of a class of directors will expire, or at any time when a vacancy exists on the board of directors, the association then representing the organizations or associations of independent producers or independent production entities in the United States (the "representative association") shall name the successor directors to succeed such class or to fill the unexpired balance of such predecessor director's term in the event of a vacancy, subject to the approval of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting ("CPB") and of the board of directors of the corporation as provided in this Article FIFTH. The identity of such representative association shall be determined by the organizations or associations of independent producers or independent production entities in the United States, and not by CPB or the corporation. The Bylaws of the corporation shall specify reasonable procedures and timetables, consistent with the provisions of this Article FIFTH, for the process of selecting successor directors.

(D) In naming successors to the board of directors, the representative association shall select distinguished citizens who, individually, shall have a demonstrated awareness and understanding of independent media and a demonstrated commitment both to independent productions for public broadcasting and to the goals of diversity, innovation, excellence and artistic integrity in public broadcasting programming. Collectively, the board of directors shall reasonably reflect a racial, ethnic, gender, sexual orientation, regional and artistic diversity, shall reflect the diversity of television genres, and shall reflect compliance with the congressional recommendation that an appropriate number of personnel from public television stations will serve on the advisory council and governing board of the corporation.

# RESULTS OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THE CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING AND THE NATIONAL COALITION OF INDEPENDENT PUBLIC BROADCASTING PRODUCERS REGARDING THE INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE, INC.

In the Public Telecommunications Act of 1988, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting was directed by Congress to provide adequate funds for an independent production service which will fund the production of public television programs by independent producers and independent production entities. Six million dollars for production will be available through the service in its first year, beginning October 1, 1989. In accordance with the Act, these funds "shall be used exclusively in pursuit of (CPB's) obligation to expand the diversity and innovativeness of programming available to public broadcasting."

CPB invited representatives of the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers to meet with CPB representatives to establish a process and timetable for creating this independent production service. The National Coalition is an organization representing over 100 independent producers and media arts organizations. After a period of meetings and correspondence between and among CPB, the National Coalition, and other organizations and associations of independent producers, CPB agreed to continue meeting with the National Coalition, on behalf of the organizations or associations of independent producers or independent production entities, to discuss some basic principles for the establishment of the new service.

In the course of these discussions, CPB agreed to allow the National Coalition to submit a slate of names for the initial board of directors of the new service, subject to CPB approval. The discussions also resulted in the preparation of articles of incorporation for the new service.

The articles include a process for selecting successor directors that is similar to the process used for initial board selection. The process provides that, subject to approval by CPB and the board of the service, successor directors will be named by "the association....representing the organizations or associations of independent producers or independent production entities in the United States [at the time just prior to the expiration of the terms of a class of directors or whenever there is a vacancy on the board] (the 'representative association')." The articles further indicate that the identity of such "representative association" is a determination made by the organized independent producer community, and not by CPB or the board of the service. At present that "representative association" is the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers. CPB will continue to work with the Coalition as the "representative association," without further demonstrations of support from the organized field of independent producers, so long as CPB's actions in so doing are consistent with Paragraph (C) of Article FIFTH of the articles of incorporation.

The discussions also addressed three additional areas of importance to the operation of the service and the results of those discussions are summarized below.

### 1. Start Up or Transition Budget

As set forth in the attached pro-forma budget, it is estimated that a total of $93,000 in start up funds and/or in-kind services from CPB will be necessary for the service's operations from the date of incorporation until a first year operating plan will have been developed and proposed by the service and approved by CPB. Our estimate is that the process of arriving at an approved operating plan should be completed by December 31, 1989. The purpose of this start-up budget is to provide the funds necessary for activities associated with the initial policy determinations of the new board, for the efforts to seek out and hire initial key staff, and for the work of preparing the draft of the service's first budget and plan for submission to CPB.

The funds approved in this budget will be made available by CPB to reimburse the service for actual expenses incurred, according to a payment schedule which will be worked out between CPB and the service. Since this is a new entity and a new operation, CPB recognized that there are likely to be a number of changes in the individual elements of the budget, and that the service will need considerable latitude and flexibility to make adjustments within the total amount authorized. CPB agrees to provide reasonable advances on the budget so that the new service can establish and maintain a working fund for timely payment of

**Lawrence M. Sapadin**, Executive Director, Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers, and President, National Coalition of Public Broadcasting Producers

**Joan Shigekawa**, Program and Production Executive, The Program for Art on Film

The board will determine the site for the headquarters of ITVS, develop program policies and priorities, design an administrative structure, and initiate hiring a staff. They will then draft an operating plan and a budget for the current fiscal year, under which the service will begin distributing $6-million for independent production each

salaries and expenses. As long as the total budget is not increased or decreased and the individual line items are consistent with the purposes listed above, the service may make reallocations in line items of the budget in order to meet its operational needs without CPB approval. CPB will receive periodic accounting of the funds from the service, which will be subject to CPB audit. The total budget may be increased or decreased only with the prior written approval of CPB.

**2. CPB's Budget Process and the New Service**

CPB will determine the level and type of financial assistance to the new service through its annual operating budget process. The process will be along the following lines:

a. The board of the service will recommend a proposed operating budget to CPB each year to cover the basic operating expenses of the service for the upcoming fiscal year (starting October 1st). The proposed budget will be tied to the proposed operating plan for the service for the upcoming fiscal year, which will be presented to CPB at the same time.*

b. CPB management will review the proposed budget of the service in the same manner as it reviews all other elements of the CPB budget, taking into account available revenue and its priorities as developed from legislative, statutory and other policy sources. (See description below.)

c. CPB management will recommend to the CPB Board in January a proposed operating budget, including funds for the independent service. CPB management will consult with management of the service prior to the transmittal of the CPB budget to the Board in January.

d. The CPB Board will adopt the budget (usually in March), with or without changes from CPB management's recommendations and the independent service will be notified of the approved funding.

e. To the extent that the final amount approved for support of the basic operating expenses of the service requires a modification to the proposed operating plan, the plan will be modified and resubmitted to CPB for approval at a later time to be agreed upon by CPB and the service.

CPB will not specify the line items or the allocations of any budget proposed from the service. It will, however, review each budget submission using the following standards and criteria, which are consistent with how it would review any request for funding.

i. The proposed budget should be consistent with the activities contained in the proposed operating plan. To the extent that activities deviate from the prior year's plan, they must be fully justified and the impact on the budget explained.

ii. All line items must be in sufficient detail to provide the rates, assumptions and methodologies underlying the budget estimates. For example, for travel, the estimate must show the number of people travelling, number of days and the cost per day for travel. For personnel, the hourly, monthly or annual salary must be shown, etc.

iii. CPB's review of the budget estimates will take into account, in addition to the two items listed above, CPB's total revenue picture for the upcoming year, and CPB's priorities, consistent with its mission statement, Board policies and CPB's legislative and statutory obligations. If CPB management determines that it must provide less than the full amount requested by the service, it will look to the service itself to revise its budget to take into account fewer resources. CPB would not direct the service to revise individual line items unless they were inconsistent with the CPB contract with the service, including the operating plan, or in some other way violated the basic operating assumptions under which the service was established, as reflected in its articles of incorporation or its bylaws.

**3. CPB Payment of Overhead and Promotion Expenses**

The Coalition and CPB recognized that the question of whether CPB has a statutory obligation to provide overhead and promotion funds for the service was not appropriate for negotiation. However, CPB will provide the new service with reasonable and necessary overhead and promotion funds under the annual budget process described above in numbered paragraph 2.

*To make the necessary transition by the new service to CPB's normal funding cycle, the deadlines for FY 1990-FY 1992 are as follows. For FY 1990, the service shall provide its proposed operating plan and budget to CPB 120 days after the date of incorporation of the service. For FY 1991, the service shall provide its proposed operating plan and budget to CPB 180 days after incorporation. For FY 1992, the service shall provide its proposed operating plan and budget to CPB by September 15, 1990.


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During the negotiations leading up to the agreement, one of the key issues was CPB's recognition of the Coalition as the legitimate representative of independent film- and videomakers in this country. Differences also arose over the process of selection of future board members, as it relates to the accountability of those who will govern the service.

An excerpt from the ITVS articles of incorporation and the full text of the joint letter of agreement between CPB and the Coalition are reprinted here. Article Three of the incorporation papers embodies the principles which are the basis for the new service. These were ratified at a meeting of the Coalition last March in Rochester, New York. Article Five, paragraph C establishes that the Coalition, as the representative organization of independent film/videomakers will name subsequent ITVS board members, subject to the approval of CPB and the sitting ITVS board. Paragraph D of the same article lists the criteria for choosing those members.

The CPB-Coalition letter underscores that determination of the representative organization for the field is made *by* the independent producer community, not CPB or the ITVS board, and states that CPB recognizes the Coalition as that organization. Although one stumbling block in the negotiations was CPB's contention that it has no legal obligation to provide funds for ITVS operations and promotion of the work it produced, in the joint letter CPB agrees that it will provide adequate support for overhead and promotion expenses for the service, as well as start-up funds.

MARTHA GEVER

## RUN, JESSE, RUN: MORE ON THE HELMS AMENDMENT

Who knows what evil lurks in your local, federally-supported art gallery? Like a modern day posse of night riders, conservative legislators haven't relented in their charge on the National Endowment for the Arts, with measures to protect the populace from "obscene or indecent art." Or as Texas representative Richard Armey put it, "morally reprehensible trash." [For a thorough review of the summer art wars, see Lucinda Furlong's "Media Clip" in the October 1989 *Independent*.]

Armey and Senator Alfonse D'Amato (R-New York) led the first assault on the NEA last spring, fueling the furor over Andres Serrano's photograph *Piss Christ* and riding the headwinds generated by the controversy over a touring retrospective of Robert Mapplethorpe's work. They called for punishment of the offending NEA grantees responsible for the exhibits of Serrano and Mapplethorpe's photographs. At the very least, they wanted restrictions on the type of work the Endowment could fund. Bringing up the rear, South Carolina Senator Jesse Helms sneaked an amendment through the Senate in July that would restrict Federal grants for art deemed offensive. And the race was on, with conservative legislators backed by fundamentalist church activists facing off against the art world and stalwart NEA supporters like Sidney Yates (D-Illinois).

On September 13, when introduced into the House of Representatives, the Helms amendment was temporarily outflanked by Yates and Ohio Republican Ralph Regula. The House voted 264 to 153 to cut off debate on Dana Rohrabacher's (R-California) motion to accept the Helms amendment. Instead, they voted in favor of instructing the conference committee to "address the concerns" of the amendment, which, according to Yates, they would have done anyway. The move protected House members from having to vote on the amendment, which would make them vulnerable to right-wing lobbying in their home districts—"Does your constituency know you support sado-masochistic pornography, yes or no?"

Whether or not the Helms amendment will be revised, modified, or put to rest should be known this fall. The matter now goes back to the appropriations conference committee, according to Dean Amhaus, senior associate at Duncan Associates, lobbyists for the American Council for the Arts. The conferees from the House and Senate will probably return with compromise legislation by the end of September, when, technically, the appropriations bill has to be drafted. The content of their proposal is anyone's guess, says Amhaus. There is some talk, for example, of forming an independent commission to review the controversy. The conferees will certainly have to come up with a compromise that is satisfactory to Helms. As Amhaus put it, "No one wants Jesse Helms waving a Mapplethorpe catalogue around on the Senate floor," and he can reintroduce the same amendment when Congress reconvenes and has threatened to do just that.

Whatever happens, it is clear the art world can expect more than a winter chill. Parliamentary weapons brandished on the Hill can win a few battles, but Helms and company seem to believe they have the troops on their side. Witness the fear of public exposure on the part of legislators opposed to the Helms amendment. And among artists and institutions that depend on federal dollars, the furor may create an environment of fear of officially-sanctioned censorship and loathing for risky projects. Read: self-censorship. Given the prevailing winds in Washington, would the Collective for Living Cinema have thought twice about showing Curt McDowell's unapologetic gay sexual adventure *Loads*, a film they were able to screen with little fanfare last spring? Would Facets Multimedia have shown Jean-Luc Godard's *Hail Mary* despite the vociferous objections and violent reactions of some Catholics? Could this magazine have published its July '88 or July '89 covers with lesbian and gay references? Would any number of political filmmakers even bother to

THE INDEPENDENT
FILM & VIDEO MONTHLY

# AIVF

## Books and Tapes

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seek public funding? And if they did, would they be able to make the grade? Helms' forces may have lost a battle in the House, but they may still win a cultural war that extends far beyond the Hill—unless supporters of no-strings arts funding are able to mobilize their forces beyond allies in the halls of Congress and within our own arts institutions.

RENEE TAJIMA

## MICKEY LELAND: 1945-1989

When Texas Congressman Mickey Leland died tragically in a plane crash this past August at age 44, African American video- and filmmakers were among the many people who lost an understanding friend and active supporter. Leland had a deep appreciation for the problems we face and displayed his commitment most recently by supporting congressional legislation to create an independent production service. I discussed the concept of the programming service with him during early lobbying efforts and he fully grasped the analogy between African Americans culturally starving for images of themselves and Africans physically starving from drought and civil war.

Leland was an exceptional legislator who provided much needed leadership on both these fronts. As one of the more effective members of the House telecommunications subcommittee, Leland persistently looked after the interests of women, people of color, and children, and pushed for broadcasters to take their social obligations seriously. He led the campaign to include equal employment opportunity language in the 1984 Cable Act and pushed to include women in minority preference ownership rules.

As the founder and first chair of the House Select Committee on Hunger, established in 1984, Leland traveled to Africa frequently. His fatal crash occurred on his seventh humanitarian trip to Ethiopia, when he and a group of U.S. and Ethiopian officials were en route to the refugee camp at Fugnido on the Sudan border, where more than 30,000 young Sudanese orphans receive U.S. aid. Leland played a pivotal role in making such aid possible. His death is a loss for all of us.

Leland is survived by his wife, Alison, and a three-year-old son.

ROY CAMPANELLA II

*Roy Campanella II is a filmmaker who is developing Langston Hughes' novel* Not Without Laughter *for* American Playhouse.

## ROBIN WEBER: 1954-1989

Robin Weber fainted after a hike in the Berkshires over the July 4th weekend. She never regained consciousness. The significance of her sudden passing, at age 35, is probably lost on most current readers of *The Independent*. But some of us will


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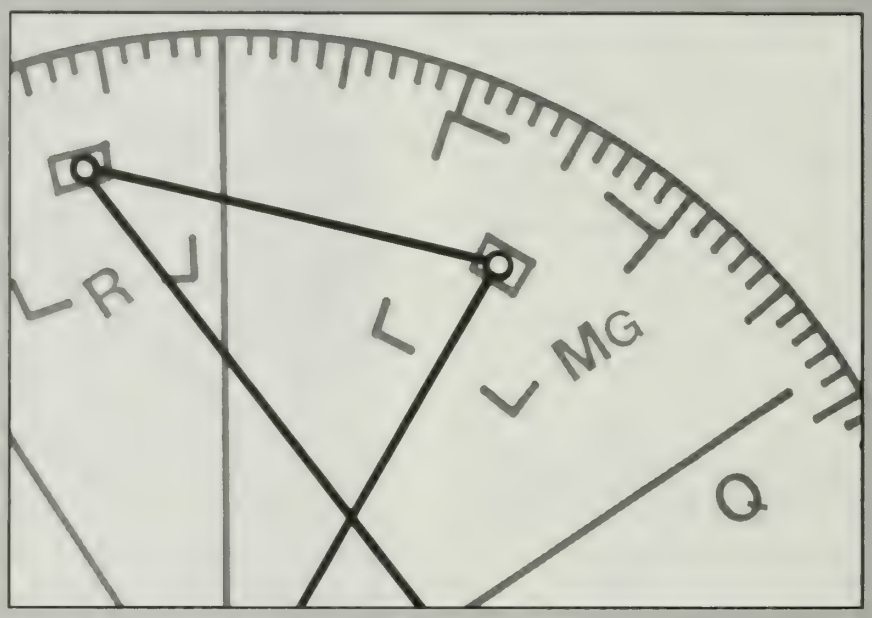
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remember that Robin was the key figure in a very important chapter of Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers' history. It was she, more than anyone else, who put AIVF on the map in the 1970s as an effective advocate for independents.

The first time I met Robin was in 1973 or '74 when a group of young independents began meeting at the loft of the newly formed AIVF. We all had our problems with public television and thought we had some solutions. During the next few years, we defined our positions, refined our arguments, held press conferences, made contacts, and eventually influenced Congress.

Robin was the glue that held this movement together. She was the one who made the phone calls, typed the minutes, wrote the letters, initiated the contacts, and eventually coordinated testimony before the House of Representatives. It was Robin's good work that established AIVF as a credible voice and enabled the argument for funding of independents to emerge. The immediate result was the provision for funding independent work in the Public Television Financing Act of 1978. The long range effects are still being felt.

After leaving AIVF, Robin enrolled in an M.B.A. program at Columbia University. While there, she and I worked together on a development project for Locus Communications. We proposed organizing a conference in New York City that would help raise the general awareness of public access, as well as raise money. This was during the cable franchising process for Brooklyn, Queens, Staten Island, and the Bronx; cable was a hot, timely issue. Perhaps the project was too ambitious, but with only cool and uncommunicative rejection letters to show for a year's work, we finally gave up on the project. This experience confirmed for Robin that the not-for-profit world was too small to accommodate her dreams.

The last time I saw her was this past spring when we both attended a breakfast seminar for entrepreneurs and venture capitalists. Robin had built a nice business as a corporate communications consultant and was learning about leveraged buyouts. She was in her element, working the room for contacts, impressing people with her knowledge and dynamism.

Robin Weber was a bright, capable, and energetic advocate for independents. That she left the field because she found it too frustrating and confining is something we should take time to consider. What she gave to the field was a strong foundation upon which to build an advocacy platform. If she's been largely forgotten by independents, this too is something we should pause to reflect upon. Robin's gone, her work remains, and, as always, she's left us something to think about.

GERRY PALLOR

*Gerry Pallor is the founder of Locus Communications and has been active in the independent movement since the start of AIVF.*

## SEQUELS

Californians are breathing easier now that the **California Arts Council's 1989-90 budget** has been approved with a $1-million increase over last year's amount. The victory is sweeter because of the earlier possibility of a $3-million cutback, proposed by Governor George Deukmejian, which the California Confederation of the Arts and many state legislators actively fought. The new budget stands at $16.6-million.

□ □ □

Two independent producers were among the 29 people in arts, sciences, and community affairs awarded "genius" grants this year by the **John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation**. Errol Morris, director of such films as *The Thin Blue Line* and *Gates of Heaven*, and video artist Bill Viola, whose videotapes and installations have been exhibited around the world, will be receiving five-year fellowships of between $30,000 and $75,000 annually to pursue their work.

□ □ □

Sundance has recently restructured several key staff positions for its United States Film Festival. **Alberto Garcia** has been named the competition director and will be in charge of programming policy, procedure, and selection for the festival's competition. Past program director **Tony Safford**, who has stepped up to become Sundance's director of programming and special events, will remain involved with the festival, designing its overall creative profile.

## FIVF THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the foundation affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent producer community, including publication of *The Independent*, maintenance of the Festival Bureau, seminars and workshops, an information clearinghouse, and a grant making program. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the following agencies, foundations and organizations: The New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fund, the Beldon Fund, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Consolidated Edison Company of New York, the Benton Foundation, and the Funding Exchange.


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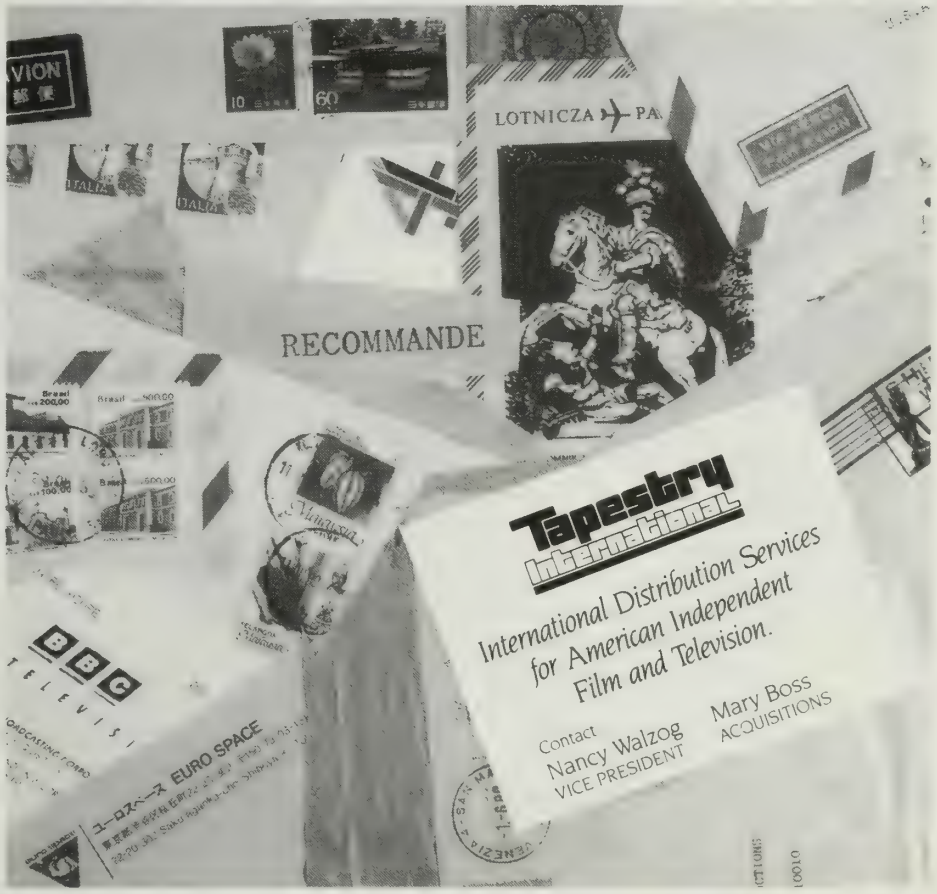
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# A CHILD'S EYE VIEW: ICA'S REEL ART PROGRAM



**The ICA's Reel Art program, aimed at kids and parents looking for something other than Saturday morning cartoons, exposes children to such innovative films as *Yours for the Taking*, by Karen Aqua and Jeanée Redmond.**

Courtesy filmmakers

Karen Rosenberg

While children are exposed to a great number of mass-produced cartoons, they are rarely shown film art by independents. For about two and a half years, the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) in Boston has tried to remedy that situation with two-hour Saturday morning workshops called Reel Art for kids and their adult care-givers. Some families sign up for a series of four or five workshops, while others attend just one session. More than simply a film exhibition series, this is a hands-on form of art education which teaches young and older viewers to see film as art.

In 1983, Chriss Holderness, the curator of education at the ICA, began to expand the institution's outreach efforts to include family programs like Reel Art, as well as a range of education programs with schools. The Reel Art instructors are often graduate students in art education at Boston University or the Massachusetts College of Art. Holderness meets with them before each session to make up the lesson plans and afterwards, to go over the teachers' written reports of what activities and films worked well, and which flopped.

Experimental films not made for children have proved a favorite among three to six-year-olds who are the main participants in the workshops. "Even if you advertise that the workshops are for ages six to 12, you'll still get three to six-year-olds because people with young kids are always looking for new things to do with them," says Holderness. "The structure of nonnarrative film seems to mirror the way this age group thinks. It's hard to interest kids nine or older in experimental film, since their expectations about film have been formed and their thought patterns are more logical."

Because 20-minute films will lose most three-year-olds, Holderness generally selects shorter works, a lot of which are animated. She has learned about new works by word of mouth, from the Center for Children's Media in New York City, and from festival catalogues, like the catalogue of the Chicago International Festival of Children's Films. Since she doesn't repeat films, she rents rather than buys, drawing on the distribution services of the National Film Board of Canada, the Museum of Modern Art, Pyramid Films in Santa Monica, Picture Start in Chicago, Direct Cinema in Los Angeles, and area independents. She also borrows videotapes from Electronic Arts Intermix in New York City and from Video Data Bank in Chicago and projects them on the screen in the ICA's theater, since children, she says, like their images large. "I'd like to do more multicultural programming, but short works appropriate to children are hard to find," she notes.

Each session of Reel Art begins in the gallery space before it is opened to the public, to make the children and adults feel comfortable in a museum setting. Using the Boston Children's Museum mailing list and putting notices in the *Boston Globe* and other media, Holderness has brought adults to "Reel Art" who have never been to the ICA before.

In the gallery, the children and adults do a short warm-up project based on the theme of the day. (When I took my six-year-old niece to a workshop entitled "Delightful Dreams," we began by making drawings of our dreams.) Then two films, generally by the same filmmaker, are shown in the ICA theater. (We saw John Lassiter's computer-animated *Red's Dream* and *Tin Toy*.) Afterwards, on the stage and in the aisles of the theater, there's another art project using different materials, which reflects the theme or the colors, shapes, sounds, and movement in the film. And then the group moves back into the gallery where the children and the instructor discuss a part of the exhibit on display.

"Small kids like structure and repetition," observes Holderness. "We try to relate the concepts in the films to other visual arts, so children will think in an interdisciplinary way. The idea is to show, in a nondidactic manner, that there's more going on visually than what's on television or in *Ghostbusters II*."

*Karen Rosenberg is a writer whose work has appeared in* Sight and Sound, *the* Nation, *the* Boston Globe, In These Times, *and elsewhere.*

# RHETORICAL QUESTIONS: CPB'S REPORT ON DIVERSE AUDIENCES

Quynh Thai

The Corporation for Public Broadcasting's (CPB) report on the needs and service to minority audiences by public television was released on July 1 with little fanfare. Entitled *To Know Ourselves*, the 59-page report was drawn up and submitted to Congress in compliance with the Public Broadcasting Act of 1988. It is serving double-duty as CPB's initial response to two requirements in the law: 1. a triennial assessment of "the needs of minority and diverse audiences; the plans of public broadcasting entities...to address such needs; the ways radio and television can be used to serve racial, ethnic, and other minority groups; and projections concerning minority employment by public broadcasting" and 2. an annual report on public television's service to minority audiences on programming, training, minority employment, and CPB's efforts to increase the number of stations eligible for CPB financial support, in the form of Community Service Grants. "Minority and diverse audiences," as defined by the Act, includes "racial and ethnic minorities (e.g., African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders); recent immigrant populations...; persons for whom English is a second language; [and] adults who lack basic reading skills."

The report, which is available through CPB's Policy Planning and Development Department, was based on findings from a two-day colloquy held last April, to which CPB invited 40 representatives from minority communities and an equal number of public broadcasters. Their objective, the participants were told, was "to identify societal needs that might be addressed by public broadcasters."

Although an important gesture on the part of CPB, *To Know Ourselves* does not offer any new insights into what are by now familiar issues. Nor does it address at any length the concerns of minority media-makers. It begins by pointing out the imperatives of empowerment and inclusion—specifically, involving minorities in all aspects of production and programming, accurately portraying minorities on screen, and adequately training and promoting minorities to key, decision-making positions within the broadcasting system.

Subsequent chapters elaborate these issues primarily by explaining how CPB has dealt with these needs to date and why it has been difficult to remedy the problems. But in place of concrete, future strategies to rectify past neglect, the report presents only abstract generalities.

Regarding the diversification of audiences, the CPB document states that public television draws scant minority audiences except for certain children's, nature, scientific and "how-to" programs, and to a lesser degree, public affairs. Therefore, the report reasons, these existing programs should serve as the models for any future minority-oriented programming, since this is what minority viewers tune in to. "The first priority is to work on the programs people are already watching and make them more diverse," explains Tom Coleman, director of the Planning and Development Department in charge of producing the report.


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"We are not ruling out new programs," he says, "but don't know exactly what we'd be looking into."

On the paucity of minority-produced work, the CPB publication reports that broadcasters are sometimes reluctant to air such programs, particularly those produced through the five CPB-funded minority consortia. In a survey of public television programmers, CPB found that many felt the production quality of consortia-produced programs to be inferior and that the consortia were "political entities rather than reliable production resources." In the report, CPB reiterates its commitment to the minority consortia. (In the same legislation that required this report on minority service, Congress recommended that CPB allocate $3-million per year for minority-produced programs in addition to the $800,000 currently received by the five consortia.)

The number of minorities in decision-making positions inside those public television stations receiving Community Service Grants from CPB has risen since 1981, according to the report. Currently, 11 percent are in positions to make decisions about programming and program production. Of these, most are located in the 10 largest U.S. cities. Twenty-four out of the 191 CPB-funded stations have no minority employees in official, management, or technical positions. While the report says that most stations assure CPB that they will hire more minorities by 1992, it does not explain how CPB will enforce these promises.

In its appraisal of minority-controlled stations, the report concludes that increasing their numbers will not guarantee more minority viewers. Comparing the viewerships of minority-controlled stations and general public stations in the same cities, CPB found the larger stations drew more minority viewers than the smaller ones with an ethnic focus. Hence, states the report, "Although additional channels [to broadcast programs with racially segmented appeal] should not be discouraged, they are not necessarily the most effective way of providing services to minorities."

There has been scant reaction to the CPB report, since it was not widely distributed. Those in the independent community who have seen it react with little enthusiasm. "[It] is obviously geared to Congress," states James Yee, executive director of the National Asian American Telecommunications Association, one of the CPB-supported minority consortia. "CPB made assumptions about minorities without any feasibility studies." These assumptions and the report's vague rhetoric frustrated other readers. Jose Luis Ruiz, executive director of the Latino Consortium, is particularly annoyed by the report's statement about the inferior quality of minority-consortia productions. Ruiz points out that the information about broadcasters' reluctance to use consortia material was extracted from a study done several years ago, in which the information on the consortia was placed in the context of inadequate CPB funding. Says Ruiz, "If they invest the proper amount of money into the consortia, we'd rise to the challenge." Comparing consortia-produced programs to those that receive measurably more funds and the audiences of small stations to larger, well-supported ones, Ruiz adds, is like comparing apples to oranges. Ruiz is also skeptical of conclusions based on a two-day meeting. Similar colloquia should have been held all over the country, he argues, to properly outline various regional concerns of minority groups.

Debra Lee, associate director of the Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations, was invited to present a paper at the meeting on the health needs of Asian Americans—with only three weeks' notice. Despite the short preparation time, Lee maintains that the discussions were substantial. But she was frustrated by the lack of strategizing. Lee, who has worked in radio production, says that most of the minority experts at the colloquy had no understanding of how CPB or public broadcasting works. Consequently, the group was limited in its ability to judge past CPB actions toward minorities and recommend future courses. Although she has received a copy of the report, Lee reports that she has had no word from CPB about follow-up or specific actions.

Although CPB's Coleman recognizes that the report was hastily put together, he is satisfied with the results of this preliminary effort to step back and conduct a survey of the issues. Because the agency had only five months in which to produce the report, Coleman says that there was no time to conduct original research. The audience statistics in the report were purchased from Nielsen ratings data, which only monitors African American and Latino audiences. Coleman indicates that the CPB and minority groups might have had differing expectations for this report. But, he hopes, the process leading up to these triennial, mandated reports will yield the substantial commitments people are seeking. While the report states that CPB will convene similar meetings to that held in April, Coleman is not sure who will be invited to these gatherings and when they will take place. He promises that producers will be among the next expert consultants and urges those interested in providing input to contact him directly at CPB.

*Quynh Thai is a freelance writer based in New York City.*

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# DOCUMENTING DEFAMATION: WHAT IS STATED? WHAT IS TRUTH?

Sheldon Siporin

One of the pitfalls of films documenting or dramatizing actual events is the possibility of being sued for defamation. Defamation, broadly, is a false statement which tends to injure identified parties in their reputation, profession, or community standing. This simple-sounding concept can become frightfully complicated. There are also a host of hi-tech legalities to confound the confusion.

Generally libel is a defamation in writing while slander is a defamation made verbally.[1] The New York courts classify defamation in a film or television broadcast as libel. But the courts will not merely read the shooting script of a film targeted as libel and redline derogatory sentences (e.g., "You are a crook."). The "impact" of both the visual and audio components will be reviewed "in their entirety." This radically expands the range of interpretation.

A well known case illustrating this is *Davis v. Costa-Gavras* (619 F. Supp. 1372). Author Tom Hauser wrote a nonfiction work entitled *The Execution of Charles Horman: An American Sacrifice*, which was published in 1978. It detailed the apparent abduction and execution of Charles Horman, a U.S. citizen and writer who lived in Santiago, Chile. These events occurred in the aftermath of a violent military coup which deposed the government of Salvador Allende Gossens.

*Missing*, a film based on the book, was produced several years later. It was directed by the celebrated Constantin Costa-Gavras and released by Universal Pictures, Inc., in 1982. The film purported to be factual and historically accurate. It depicted the coup and the subsequent search for Horman, using flashbacks to disclose events preceding his death. It also described certain questionable activities of the U.S. government and its Chilean representatives in connection with the coup.

A lawsuit was filed in Manhattan federal district court against Costa-Gavras, Universal Studios, and MCA, Inc. (parent corporation of Universal). The action was brought by Captain Ray E. Davis, Commander of the U.S. Military Group and Chief of the U.S. Navy Mission to Chile at the time of the coup. Two other U.S. officials stationed in Chile joined in the suit.[2] Capt. Davis alleged that the film claimed U.S. complicity in Horman's death and accused him personally of "ordering or approving the order for the murder of Charles Horman." This was the core of the libel.

Defendants Costa-Gavras and Universal moved to dismiss the complaint. They said, in essence, "Look, here's the shooting script, read it over and show us where it says that Capt. Davis ordered the execution of Charles Horman." There is no such statement. The military commander in the film never orders that Charles Horman be killed. No character in the film admits that Davis ordered Horman killed. Alright, you say, run the film. What do we see? There is no visual where, for example, the American military commander signals a firing squad, who shoot down Horman as the commander smiles approvingly. The logic seems solid. The defendants completely sidestepped the issue of whether the alleged defamatory statement was true. They simply argued that there was no such defamatory statement at all.

The court agreed that there was no literal statement. It also was unable to single out an explicit visual showing unmistakable guilt. But it noted that "inferences, implications and insinuations from particular passages of the film in context, and from the film considered as a whole" could form the basis for the defamation claimed by Capt. Davis. Does this hold even if every isolated factual incident in the film was demonstrably accurate? Apparently.

The court reasoned that U.S. military involvement in the coup is suggested and "established" throughout the film in numerous scenes. It pointed to one flashback where, just after the coup, Horman comments, "You wanna hear somethin' strange? Our hotel was full of American military officers." Later, another scene shows Horman speaking to an U.S. naval officer who says, "[T]he Navy sent me down to do a job, she's done." He never specifies what the job was, however.

It is a giant step from suggesting U.S. military involvement in a coup (true or not) to making a "concrete accusation" against an identified party. The claims of the two U.S. officials suing along with Capt. Davis foundered at this step. But the court thought Davis was overtly implicated.

The court explained that the film painted a cinematic "scenario" in which Capt. Davis had power, motive, and opportunity to order the killing (classic elements of criminality). Horman was portrayed as a leftist writer who "was always asking questions... taking notes" to document the American military role in the coup. Horman "poked his nose around in a lot of dangerous places where he didn't belong." The camera showed emphatic close-ups of entries in Horman's notebook indicting the U.S. military. Thus, Capt. Davis had a motive to "prevent an exposé of the secret and politically highly sensitive supposed official American military role in the coup."

The court then discussed the captain's "power" to order Horman's murder: the film continually hinted that Capt. Davis had close ties to the new Chilean junta. For example, one scene showed him dining convivially with the junta's chief of staff. In another scene, the captain's vehicle is stopped at a checkpoint by a Chilean soldier, but the soldier is profusely apologetic when Davis identifies himself and he vigorously salutes Davis. The captain is introduced to Horman a few days after the coup. Horman is shown to fear the captain. One scene shows the captain giving Horman a lift home, but Horman gets out in front of a hotel, confiding to a friend, "I didn't want him to know where I live." The court thereby concludes that the film overall is "susceptible" to the defamatory meaning that Capt. Davis "ordered or approved" the subsequent murder of Charles Horman.

Costa-Gavras and Universal protested that "the film as a whole studiously and deliberately leaves open the precise nature of American involvement, if any, in Charles Horman's disappearance and death." They pointed to a sort of "disclaimer"[3] in the closing lines flashed on the screen with a narrative voiceover:

> Ed Horman filed suit charging government officials... with complicity and negligence in the death of his son. ... After years of litigation, the information necessary to prove or disprove complicity remains classified as secrets of state. The suit was dismissed.

Defendants also noted that, in the film, the captain strongly denies charges by Horman's father that "an American official co-signed a kill order."

The court felt that the Captain's denial, taken in context of the entire film, could be viewed as a "cover-up." The concluding lines in the "disclaimer" might conceivably be construed, in context, as still more evidence of a "cover-up." It therefore refused to dismiss Capt. Davis' lawsuit.

A "straight" documentary is susceptible to a similar analysis of "defamatory statements." *Missing* actually opened with a statement on screen,

accompanied by a voiceover stressing the accuracy of the film:

> This film is based on a true story. The incidents and facts are documented. ... Some of the names have been changed to protect the innocent and also to protect this film."

Courts have limited power, or desire, to find a suspect statement as not conceivably defamatory. This increases the possibility of a defendant being subjected to protracted litigation. Is there any way for the filmmaker to avoid a *Missing* lawsuit entirely? To point a broad finger at "the American military" is not actionable. To sketch myriad officials as indifferent or secretive is not too hazardous. Totally objective reportage is protected but rare. (Shot selection and editing may in themselves project a bias, and is any explicit visual devoid of innuendo?). To present a filmmaker's viewpoint as mere "opinion" is protected, if based on fact (but what's opinion?) To obtain a carefully drafted release from Capt. Davis is the idea, but hardly feasible. Truth is a complete defense, as we shall see, but only if it can be proven, or at least not disproven.

The year after the first *Missing* decision defendants again moved to dismiss the suit (650 F. Supp. 153). This time they relied on technical Constitutional grounds: the libel action should be dismissed because it lacked the essential element of "actual malice." What is this and where does it come from? The U.S. Supreme Court in the landmark case of *New York Times v. Sullivan* (401 U.S. 265) ruled that the First Amendment protection of free speech and press prohibits recovery by a public official (or public figure) for a defamatory falsehood by the media, relating to his official conduct. Recovery can be permitted only if there is proof that the defamatory statement was made with knowledge of its falsity or "reckless disregard" of whether it was true or not (actual malice). Proof must be "clear and convincing," a shade less rigorous than the familiar criminal standard of "reasonable doubt." This very tough barrier to defamation safeguards news gathering and political speech.

The *Missing* court considered the law carefully. It remarked, after observing that the film was based on a "meticulous" well researched book, "[I]t is highly doubtful that the plaintiff can adduce affirmative evidence at a trial of actual malice on the part of defendants." In other words, unless it could be proven by strong hard evidence that Costa-Gavras and Universal "knew" that Capt. Davis was innocent of complicity in the murder, Davis loses.

□ □ □

The "truth" of the defamation was not addressed by the *Davis* court. Sometimes the question of truth is philosophical rather than legal. The legal issue is: who has the burden to prove truth or falsity? This burden can be a difficult task if proof of falsity requires resort to classified documents (and impossible, in this case, if the statement is true). Generally, as in *Davis*, public figure plaintiffs must prove falsity of the libel, while in cases involving private parties the defendant must prove truth.

A recent decision concerning issues of "truth" (and the related question of exactly what the "false" statement is) arose in a libel action filed by Southern Air Transport against ABC (670 f. Supp. 38). The alleged libel occurred during an investigative documentary aired by ABC in 1987 on *World News Tonight*, entitled the "South Africa Connection." The story dealt with purported collusion between the U.S. government and South African officials to provide military assistance to the contras in Nicaragua. The South African role was to supply planes and flight crews for the transport of arms.

Reporter Karen Burnes described a secret trip to South Africa by the Latin American Division Chief of the C.I.A. Burnes did a voiceover narration as the screen "showed an airplane bearing the name Southern Air Transport." Burnes stated that several months after the secret C.I.A. trip "SAFAIR Freighter, a South African cargo company, opened an office, in the U.S....it signed a lease with Southern Air Transport, known for its past relationship with the C.I.A.... SAFAIR provided planes to Southern Air...which were used to fly weapons to the contras." Burnes also added that retired USAF general Richard Secord and a man "described as Lt. Col. Oliver North" met with Southern Air Transport pilots in a San Salvador safe house.

Southern Air sued ABC and reporter Burnes for libel in U.S. district court in Washington, D.C., asserting that

> the report and pictures broadcast with the report created the false and defamatory impression on the general viewer that Southern Air leased airplanes from SAFAIR as an active and knowing participant in an illegal scheme established by the governments of South Africa and the United States....

Defendant ABC moved to dismiss, as we saw Costa-Gavras and Universal do in their initial motion. ABC argued that it was not possible to interpret their broadcast in this defamatory fashion. The D.C. court, just as the *Davis* court, disagreed and concluded that it was "conceivable" that the "juxtaposition of graphics and commentary" could convey such a meaning to viewers.

We have learned by now that the courts almost invariably find a "conceivable" defamatory meaning in any slanted piece of film. We ask again, what if all the "component" pieces of this defamatory "whole" are accurate? ABC in fact argued that their broadcast was "substantial truth": they made no overt statement linking Southern Air to the illegal scheme; the major facts of their investigative report were true and undenied, even if a few minor details were incorrect.

Southern charged in their complaint that the statement that SAFAIR planes were used by Southern Air to fly weapons to the contras was "central" to the ABC report and known by ABC to be false at the time of the report. ABC argued that Southern Air did not expressly deny that it 1. leased planes from SAFAIR, and 2. flew arms to the contras.[5] It was irrelevant whether the plane flying weapons to the contras bore the SAFAIR insignia or not.

Again, the court disagreed. It observed that, if a SAFAIR plane was used, the defamatory "innuendo" was that Southern Air had "deployed" the plane in partnership with the South African government. The "truth" of this fact was thus at issue. The court's loose construction of the "defamatory statement" blocked ABC's effort to forestall extensive litigation and save a lot of legal costs. Many of these cases thus have to run their course, even if they are ultimately disposed of prior to trial. Smaller bank accounts than those of ABC can be swiftly depleted.

In 1988, continued discovery by ABC lawyers elicited an affidavit from the president of Southern Air. This disclosed that in February of 1986 an aircraft leased by Southern Air from SAFAIR delivered weapons to the contras at an air station in Honduras. This disclosure (coupled with confirmation that SAFAIR incorporated its American subsidiary and executed its lease with Southern Air *after* the secret CIA trip to South Africa) prompted ABC to renew its motion to dismiss the libel suit on grounds of "truth." (678 F. Supp. 8)

ABC at last had unequivocal proof of the "truth" of all the essential factual allegations in its report. Did Southern Air "withdraw" its libel claim? No way! Southern Air now modified its theory of libel a bit. The "central" fact that SAFAIR planes were used by Southern Air to fly weapons to the contras, now proven true, was no longer the heart of the libel. Southern Air now asserted that the false defamatory statement was the "innuendo" that it had "deliberately employed SAFAIR planes to deliver weapons to the Contras" pursuant to a U.S.-South Africa agreement. There was still no direct evidence of this illegal collusion or Southern Air's "deliberate" participation. Thus, the newly confirmed facts did not prove the libelous statement true. Quite clever theory.

The court refused to buy it. Fed up with Southern Air's ploys, the court thought it was time to put an end to this lawsuit. It was sufficient that the affidavit by Southern's president admitted that he himself was on the SAFAIR plane when it made the weapons drop! The court perhaps backed off from its broad view of the defamatory innuendo. The SAFAIR arms delivery created a "reasonable inference" that Southern Air helped "deploy" South African planes to supply the contras. Thus, hard facts pointed a finger of guilt at Southern Air. ABC's newscast was therefore true. The court dismissed the libel action.

Isn't this still unfair? Southern Air should have known from the first that its libel action was unfounded. How could they not with their president joyriding along with the arms shipment! ABC was penalized despite winning the action because it was forced to pay the cost of defending the lawsuit. Some might feel this is unjust. ABC

apparently thought so and moved for sanctions against Southern Air, which was denied.

What do filmmakers learn from these cases? It is difficult to completely shield yourself from liability, or at least the expense of defending yourself against a bad faith lawsuit, if you deal with controversial, politically charged material. It is also difficult for a public official to win a case if the material presented has a strong factual underpinning. The best option to limit exposure to such suits, short of getting signed releases, is to present any insinuation or innuendo in your material as an opinion, if possible. An opinion is not a fact unless it is conveyed as truth. Truth, like defamation, can be a murky mine field.

*Sheldon Siporin is a member of the New York State Bar Association Committee on Motion Pictures and Video and is in private practice as an attorney.*

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## NOTES

1. Historically there are technical legal distinctions between libel and slander as to proof requirements in special cases.

2. Nathaniel Davis, U.S. Ambassador to Chile and Frederick Purdy, Consul to the Santiago Consulate. Their libel claims were dismissed and are not discussed at length in this article. They made the same charge as Capt. Davis, but the court held there was no "concrete accusation" of their complicity in murder and that the film merely displayed them unfavorably.

3. Neither the defendants nor the court used the term but it is useful and convenient to view the closing lines in this way.

4. The minor name changes made were transparent: for example, Capt. Ray E. Davis was called Capt. Ray Tower in the film. The court assumed, for purposes of argument, that the identification was clear and one doubts a compelling legal argument to the contrary.

5. Southern Air apparently tried to dodge this question but later admitted it.

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# ALLIES OR ANTAGONISTS?

Tom Borrup

FROM MOVEMENTS ADVOCATING social change come organizations. From organizations come strategies for survival. The contemporary movement to bring diversity of form, content, and control to the mass media has spawned many organizations, from former FCC commissioner Nicholas Johnson's National Citizens Committee for Broadcasting (now Telecommunications Research and Action Center) to Action for Children's Television, from scores of media arts centers to perhaps a thousand cable TV public access centers. All these groups share a similar purpose. They also have somewhat differing goals and strategies that are sometimes incompatible and sometimes contradictory. Such contradictions may provide grist for the intellectual mill, but they generally gum up the works.

By definition, an independent media artist is a professional who creates exemplary work conveying powerful messages and tries to make a living from her or his craft. A cable access producer is a volunteer. Access philosophy stresses the deprofessionalization of media-making, putting the tools of production into skilled and unskilled hands alike, assigning equal value to the results and viewing all efforts as community involvement. Between the institutions that support these two kinds of producers, clashes in values are certain to occur.

During the past 20 years a network of several hundred organizations has formed to support the work of film and video artists, which includes nonprofit production facilities, exhibitors, distributors, and other groups. Likewise, as many as 1,000 access centers tied to one or more geographically defined cable system have sprung up. Both types of organizations have also established national associations: the National Alliance of Media Arts Centers (NAMAC) and the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers (NFLCP). But between the two, there has been surprisingly little communication.

The independent film/video community and the public access community face many complex issues, not the least of which are clarity of mission and economic survival. Access centers are dedicated to giving an equal voice to every person, extending the right of free speech to television by giving everyone equal access to its power. They provide the skills, the tools, and the vehicle for communicating via this ubiquitous medium. Surely limitations are inherent. Cable TV reaches less than half the television households in the U.S., and not every cable system has access channels. Resources will never be adequate for everyone to use access, nor does everyone have the inclination to share their ideas with their neighbors. However, the goal is important to a healthy democracy: many people are empowered, and many new ideas are put in circulation.

In contrast, media arts centers bring new voices to the public's eyes and ears by supporting and presenting outstanding work by independent film- and videomakers. These organizations are dedicated to creative artists and raising general understanding about the media in all its forms. Such centers are usually concerned with somewhat specialized activities, such as film exhibition, distribution of independent video, providing practical media education and production resources, and so on. While many may share the same democratic ideals as access centers, their programs frequently exercise judgement based on artistic merit and quality. Many brilliant works have resulted, affecting many people and advancing new approaches for film and television. The most troubling limitation is that not all voices are heard. Some are given opportunities while others are excluded. Herein lies the major rift between the media arts and public access institutions.

Access centers typically survive on city-mandated cable franchise fees levied on the cable company that operates the local system and are frequently run by that company. Media centers tend to have a broader base of government, foundation, and corporate arts funding, as well as institutional support from universities or major museums. In some cities both types of organizations peacefully coexist. In others they fight. And in some the two kinds of activity are awkwardly combined under one organizational roof. Some find themselves engaged in a continual struggle for survival, and others choose to compromise principles rather than fold up.

Although the political landscape of cable and public access has never been dull, the years of bloody franchise battles between city governments, cable operators, and community organizations seeking the establishment of access centers are coming to a close. Virtually all of the major urban and suburban franchises have been awarded. Long-term management of these systems—rather than building them—is now the task embraced by cable companies. But just when some thought the landscape might become peaceful, several court decisions pertaining to monopolistic tendencies within the cable industry, the entrance of telephone companies into the cable business, and the persistent efforts of cable companies to neglect or be excused from their commitments to the communities they serve have livened it up again.

However, what is probably the most profound challenge to face the access movement is quietly underway, caused by new economic conditions and choices made by those in the access movement. With so much money at stake and a powerful national lobbying organization, cable operators have begun to successfully escape from their promises to provide public access channels. The rates of cable penetration (the number of homes wired) has lagged behind earlier industry predictions and the operators have repeatedly seen access as an expendable frill. Some access centers, established with generous funding required in an original franchise agreements, now find themselves with the economic rug pulled out from under them.

At the same time, access managers, remaining focused on the philosophy of community involvement, have frequently neglected the quality of what



**Independent producers Julie Gustafson (left) and Deborah Shaffer interact with a studio audience and cable viewers during a live call-in workshop organized by the Cincinnati Cable Access Corporation. The 1986 workshop, titled the Community Document, was funded by the Ohio Arts Council.**

Courtesy Cincinnati Cable Access Corporation.

# Public Access Cable and Media Arts Centers

they send out over the cable. The resulting programming hasn't turned on too many viewers. The operators then use negative audience reactions as ammunition in their campaigns against future support for access channels and the centers that generate the programs they carry. Although there have been many excellent programs made for public access and there are a few access channels that have a built a following, in general access is not a strong competitor in the world of TV channel switching.

At a 1986 gathering of the NFLCP in San Francisco, the movement's architect George Stoney proclaimed access an institution. But, it was clear from the tone of the meeting that a survival mentality has begun to set in among more experienced access administrators. Indeed, seeking funding beyond franchise fee payments was on the minds of many access center personnel at the group's tenth anniversary get-together. Strategic positioning, audience and donor development, and other marketing concerns cannot be far behind.

ALTHOUGH MEDIA ARTS CENTERS are not yet considered major cultural institutions in the United States (unless they're a division within one, like the Museum of Modern Art's Film Department, for example), they have carved out a niche in the world of arts funding. The National Endowment for the Arts, most state arts agencies, and many large foundation and corporate contributors now see media arts as a legitimate, if not important, art form deserving support. Media arts centers still are not regarded as the equals of ballet companies, opera theaters, or art museums, but progress has been steady and uphill since the early seventies. Longevity for most such organizations (especially those that have survived the economic upheavals that shook the nonprofit sector in the early eighties) is by and large likely. Part of the strength achieved by media arts centers around the country lies in their development of clear definitions of their activities and services (strategic positioning), which has cultivated loyal followers (audiences/donors), which equals successful marketing.

In many cases, the viability of media centers has not occurred without compromises. In addition to countless personal sacrifices, the independent media movement has been forced to set priorities, tone down or camouflage political statements, and appease corporate donors or public TV executives. Similarly, the public access movement has begun to recognize that its goals are not as simple as perhaps was once assumed—nor is the task of obtaining and retaining financial support. The strategies that must be adopted to address these dilemmas may not always be consistent with the founding principles of free and universal access. And, so far, most access organizations have not yet seen the light at the end of the tunnel of survival.

In a letter sent in reply to some questions I posed to him while preparing this article, George Stoney writes, "Just because there is going to be a hard fight to secure funding [you're suggesting] we should abandon our mandate to offer a vehicle for self-expression and community concerns in order to earn fees for services and restrict our facilities to those with the ability to pay? Unfortunately there is a tendency in some quarters to do just that, a tendency that I have seen even more clearly demonstrated in media arts centers." Stoney goes on to criticize "nonprofit agency bureaucrats for whom survival is more important than mandate" and groups that don't serve constituents "unless there was a grant that obligated the organization to offer them something." But this is the dilemma faced almost daily by managers and directors of the nonprofit organizations that comprise the "third sector" in the United States. Although access centers claim to make no choices, give no one preference, many of them find themselves making important choices, perhaps more than they realize.



**Deaf actors from the Northern Sign Theater perform using American sign language in Carol Inderieden's production of *Island*, televised via Cable Access in St. Paul, Minnesota.**

Courtesy Cable Access St. Paul

IN AT LEAST ONE CITY a cable access organization is in the process of transformation from access to media arts center in order to ensure its existence. The Cincinnati Cable Access Corporation (CCAC), headed by Chuck Sherwood, was originally subsidized by franchise holder Warner Cable, which supported both a company-based access center and the independent CCAC. CCAC acted as an advocacy group and performed various community education activities to stimulate interest in and use of the access center. With an annual budget in the neighborhood of $100, 000, CCAC aggressively sought additional money to encourage production of high-quality programs. In a state with one of the highest per capita public budgets for the arts and in a city with a plethora of philanthropic institutions, Sherwood quite naturally sought and secured support for visiting artists and statewide video competitions juried by visiting curators of national stature. "At least 75 percent of the money is arts money that's been raised outside of our operating budget," he noted

In mid-1989, after several years of political lobbying, Sherwood's organization succeeded in having Cincinnati's access operation transferred from Warner's direct control to a nonprofit. Under the new terms, an independent community group would receive $3.6-million over a seven year period, and CCAC applied. They lost. CCAC then faced a decision between going out of business or pursuing its media arts activities. "There's such a dearth of innovative film and video programming in this town," says Sherwood, "that we have to fill the void." He wants to create a facility for media artists to provide more advanced skills and ideas than those available through the access center. Sherwood sees no inherent contradiction between CCAC's previous emphasis on cable access and more recent rebirth as a media arts center. The CCAC board of directors is committed to establishing the latter kind of organization and will work with several arts groups, including the Cincinnati Film Society, to rehabilitate a building intended as a new arts center for the city.

After nearly three years of operation, Cable Access St. Paul (CASP) was

# COLLABORATION WORKS

## INDEPENDENTS AT THE NEWTON TELEVISION FOUNDATION



**C. Lisa Monrose's video art work about the feminist spirituality movement, *Of Snakes, Moons, and Frogs*, was coproduced with the Newton Television Foundation.**

Courtesy Newton Television Foundation

"The self-indulgent confessions that television presents don't interest me," says Fred Simon a 43-year-old videomaker who is best known for his documentary portrait *Frank: A Vietnam Veteran*. "Interviews are valuable when individuals bear witness to what they have seen or experienced and what they feel others should know. Then telling people fulfills an obligation."

This ethical conception of television is rarely heard these days. But videomakers who find it compelling have been drawn to the nonprofit Newton Television Foundation, which Simon and his 32-year-old wife Susan Walsh have run for the last five years. Walsh's administrative experience began at 19, when she ran a women's center in Oakdale, Long Island, and continued at the Massachusetts College of Art, where, as a student, she coproduced the 1979 Eventworks, a two week festival of exhibitions, performances, and film and video screenings.

Newton Television Foundation has produced over 25 videotapes in a unique arrangement with independent producers. "It's hard for people to understand what we do because we don't fit any existing models," says Simon. "Almost anything you can name, we're not. Even potential coproducers need a few phone calls to understand what relationship they might have with us."

When Continental Cablevision received the cable license for the Boston suburb of Newton, a programming endowment was set up which funded local people to make tapes on Newton events and issues. "We found this too parochial," lawyer Jay L. Fialkow, president of the foundation's board of directors, told me, "so when Susan Walsh, an efficient administrator, and Fred Simon, an award-winning television producer, came to us, we took the opportunity to raise the level of programming." Under Walsh and Simon, the foundation produces works about contemporary life that will be of concern to Newton residents but not necessarily about the locality—pieces like *Cathy: A Girl with Anorexia*, by Elizabeth Bunker, or *Coping with Infertility*, by Dan Barnett and A.J. Sullivan.

Sometimes these works show Newton to be in the thick of things. Ben Achtenberg is now shooting a piece at Newton-Wellesley Hospital about the nursing shortage, a nationwide problem. *The Beijing Mirror*, by Carol Rainey, about three Chinese students who lived in Newton, sheds light on recent events in China. "I think we are affected by Western thoughts," said one of the students in 1985. "Like me: I just want to do whatever I want, if it's legal...I won't be afraid a lot." Distributed on VHS cassettes at the Newton Free Library, many of the foundation's works should have a long shelf-life.

Not all the foundation's projects are traditional documentaries. C. Lisa Monrose's *Of Snakes, Moons and Frogs* is an experimental piece of video art about the feminist spirituality movement. But the proposals that the foundation chooses to coproduce tend to exhibit social relevance as well as a commitment to high production values.

What the foundation offers independent producers is the use of professional video equipment, Walsh's advice about fundraising and distribution, and Simon's artistic consultation. In the standard contract, the foundation retains the rights for Newton and takes 10 percent of the gross income from screenings outside Newton, but the producer retains the copyright for the work. Since the foundation cannot afford to pay independents a salary, the producers tend to come from the Boston area, though a few have commuted from western Massachusetts. Simon and Walsh provide patience and time. They understand that media artists who are working at other jobs and scrambling for grants may need four years to complete a piece.

Compared to the millions it takes to run even a small television station, Newton Television Foundation has a tiny budget. They get $54,000 per year from Continental Cablevision, in the past received about $27,000 annually from the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities, and have obtained small grants from the Fund for the Arts in Newton as well as from corporations and individuals. Their total annual budget is $120,000. But Simon and Walsh have learned to pick up bargains by keeping a step behind the newest and latest models of equipment. Recently, they bought Betacam production equipment just as Sony was bringing out its Beta SP model and so saved thousands of dollars. "Video is only as good as the television that is in your house, and most viewers won't pick up the difference between Beta and Beta SP," maintains Walsh.

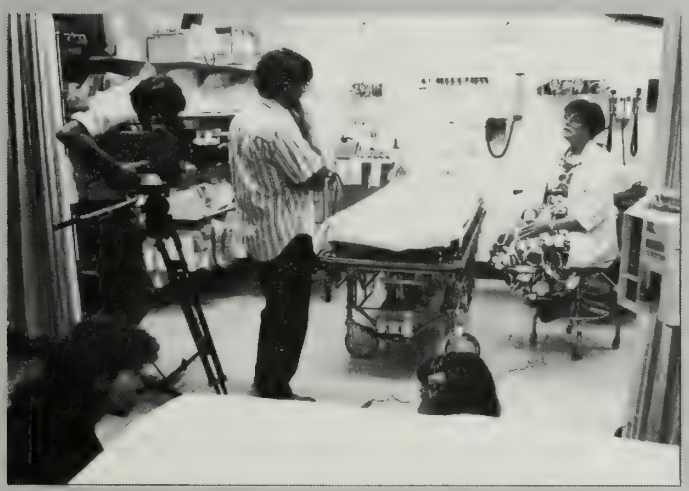
In this, too, they are working against the grain of the television industry, which generally craves higher and higher tech and scorns what was good enough a few years ago. "It is often considered prestigious to be involved in making a documentary with a lot of money behind it. We think that the technical difference between the latest and the new-but-not-latest equipment is often marginal. Using the latter is certainly a lot better than not doing anything at all," says Simon.

Among the recently-completed videos that might never have been made but for the foundation is Eric Stange's award-winning *Children of the Left*, about Americans whose parents were members of the Communist Party during the McCarthy era. "Independent producers should be able to present points of view and issues that are not dealt with in the mainstream media," Simon asserts. "We are willing to take a risk on ideas that are different."

A decade ago, such unconventional documentaries were often shown on public television, but that has become less of a possibility for independent producers. Many media artists dream of the visibility and prestige that come with PBS airings, and some of Newton Television Foundation's productions have received them. But Walsh and Simon have also explored other ways of reaching viewers. More and more, they think of television as a

preview service, which publicizes a tape that is available elsewhere. While the foundation has aired all of its productions on Continental Cablevision's Newton cable channel, it also makes them available to nursing homes, temple and church groups, and schools, often accompanied by the producer or others who can lead discussions. Says Simon, "If the expense of producing video comes down—as it should—then people won't continue to say that it costs so much that it must be seen by the largest possible audience."

Simon and Walsh would like to see videocassettes function as resources like books that people can turn to when they want and need to. They are currently working at the foundation on their own video about still-birth and miscarriage that could be shown by hospitals to couples, physicians, and support groups. The idea began with their personal experience. "When we had a stillborn baby about three years ago, we found there was no documentary out there we could look at," recalls Walsh.



**Fred Simon (with camera), codirector of the Newton Television Foundation, and Ben Achtenberg in production on *Nursing Crisis/Level Three: Reports from the Frontline*.**

Courtesy Newton Television Foundation

Now the parents of a two-year-old, Mira, Simon and Walsh lead complicated lives. He teaches documentary production part-time at Clark University. She works full-time at the foundation and these days worries about replacing the $10,000 they lost due to cuts in the Massachusetts Council for the Arts and Humanities' appropriation last August [see Karen Rosenberg, "To Halve and Halve Not: Massachusetts Cuts Arts Funding," *The Independent*, May 1989, and "Sequels," October 1989]. It might be possible for the foundation to raise money by renting its equipment or commissioning independent producers to make tapes for profit. But such activities would take Simon and Walsh away from the work that they do so well and believe in. "I understand that when public money is at stake the relevance and usefulness of funding is debated. Well, documentaries clearly have human value—they can and do help people," argues Walsh.

KAREN ROSENBERG



**From *Island*, by the Northern Sign Theater in St. Paul.**

Courtesy Cable Access St. Paul

similarly forced into a major reevaluation of its operations, although the group hasn't been dealt any devastating blows. Set up with a modest subsidy guaranteed by the franchise agreement—a fixed rate of about $200,000 annually—but with a more generous capital budget also provided by the cable operator, CASP was organized along the lines of a traditional access center, one which favored process over product. CASP manager Jim Malec is a veteran of Madison, Wisconsin, access fights during the seventies and prolonged franchise battles in Minneapolis and St. Paul during the eighties. Now, at the end of this decade, he sees a need to assess the state of access and pilot his center into the nineties intact. According to Malec, the quality of programming being generated for the five access channels by their users is not sufficient to impress city officials, the cable company, or potential private funders who he must ask to increase the amounts given to CASP. He claims too much equipment is going out and not enough finished programs are coming in. "It's not politically practical to think this situation can continue for long," says Malec. "What we're doing isn't working."

"Cable has a reputation for bad quality—as implied in the phrase 'access quality'—programming," Malec notes. "What will it take to enlighten funders to the fact that the quality doesn't have to be poor?" What it will take, concluded CASP's board of directors, are more resources devoted to professionally produced programs and staff support for proven community productions. Two programs Malec cites as examples are *Telestar News*, a weekly magazine show made from a decidedly left point of view, and *View from the Cheap Seats*, a regular baseball recap and talk show. A labor issue program produced by the local Trades and Labor Assembly in St. Paul, called *Labor Lines*, is presently in development, as is an arts review show. This, of course, means less resources for first-come, first-served equipment access philosophy—the *raison d'etre* of access. "It will be harder for someone off the street to get a program done. But I'm not sure [the first-come, first-served approach] was serving them well before," Malec concedes.

Some independent producers using CASP's equipment criticize how the center has been managed, saying too much has been spent on high-end equipment, which means that learning and using the equipment is complicated. This emphasis, they claim, accounts for the low production ratios Malec cites. No matter what the source of the problems CASP has experienced, the conflicts that Malec describes are common and inevitable. Access organizations, like their media center cousins, must account for resources and must demonstrate results—or face extinction.

"What kind of access should we be providing? Access to equipment or to a means of communications?" asks Malec. "We're not a school for people who want to learn media arts. It's too much effort for too few people." He

believes that independents will be better served by more selective attention to experienced producers. Malec's hope is that CASP will be able to provide better programs for viewers, which then will produce positive side effects guaranteeing CASP's long-term survival.

THE MORE SAVVY CABLE ACCESS centers have learned to take their first-come, first-served functions in stride. They've also learned that they must take the initiative to produce, coproduce, finance, and sometimes acquire well-made, intelligent programs that will help mold a viable image for their channel. This, then, will establish their institutions as acceptable sites for producing sponsored or funded programs. Effecting this kind of growth requires a well-developed sense of audiences and an ability to construct a program mix within a schedule. The most common sources used by access channel programmers are "syndicated" or "bicycled" access programs from other groups, coproductions with arts or other community organizations, and local access productions. Some access channel programmers even run public domain films to fill out their schedules.

Some groups have been even more resourceful. For instance, another Ohio organization, Access Columbus Television (ACTV), has teamed up with the National Black Programming Consortium (NBPC), which was created as a public television service. Each year ACTV coordinates the cablecast of the Columbus-based NBPC's annual Prized Pieces Festival, a juried national competition representing some of the most creative new work by Black film- and videomakers. NBPC raises the money necessary to prepare the work for television and publicize the screenings from the Ohio Arts Council and other sources.

ACTV is probably one of the more established and sophisticated access groups in the U.S. When executive director Carl Kucharski took up his position in 1984, he found that religious programming accounted for more than 50 percent of the time on the channel that ACTV manages. In order to strengthen its image in the community and to "ensure that all programs are permitted equal access to the television channel," ACTV established four program categories: religion, sports/health/fitness, arts/entertainment, and news/public affairs/social service. Each category is allotted a quarter of channel's the weekly schedule.

Although Kucharski is not entirely comfortable with the idea of establishing a hierarchy among access producers, he confirmed that diversifying ACTV's services and constituency is his operative strategy for maintaining financial and political support. He and ACTV assistant director Karen Helmerson also think that access in Columbus should provide a viable medium for artists and independent producers. "We want to respect artists' needs and what they can contribute to programming," says Helmerson. "Artists need more time to play with the studio and take longer with editing." Although they have no policy in place, she says they're working to develop "intelligent criteria" to help define the the term "artist" and thus decide who will receive enhanced services or other forms of support from ACTV. Kucharski intends to build an equipment base for media artists and have his organization function more like a media arts center. Besides a community film exhibition series and a video and film exhibition program at Ohio State, Columbus currently has no media center that supports local artists. ACTV also provides production services for nonprofit organizations, including several arts groups. "This is the top end of our service line," says Kucharski.

In its early days, Kucharski recalls, "access was process oriented. Now there's a shift towards the product. People are wearing ties and dealing with statistics and reports." In 1988, ACTV hired an advertising and marketing firm to help better position itself for increasing earned and contributed income. "The first step," Kucharski says, "was to raise the profile and visibility; the second to measure community recognition and viewership." He acknowledges some success at raising private money in the community for specific projects, such as training developmentally disabled people in media production. But, he admits, "They won't be likely to fund anyone to be a First Amendment free speech organization."

Discussions are presently underway within the Columbus City Council about restructuring the cable franchise to combine the management of the government, education, and public access channels into one entity (they are presently three separate operations). Because of this, Kucharski said ACTV's board has become hesitant to engage in fundraising. Although the access center is an independent nonprofit corporation, it largely depends on its city contract to provide the funds necessary to manage the public access channel. Should they lose that contract and not otherwise be included in the city's consolidation, their existence is threatened. However, Kucharski indicated that if this happens—like their Cincinnati counterpart—they might try to reshape ACTV as an independent media arts center.

ACTV CAN BE CONSIDERED one of the new breed of access centers that are beginning to look a lot like media arts centers. For their part, media arts centers frequently seem oblivious of the potential interfaces with cable access. One notable exception is the Long Beach Museum of Art's Open Channels program, funded by the California Arts Council. Now five years old, the series provides four artists per year with $2,000, a supply of videotape, and eight days' access to a local cable system studio. This cooperative venture between the museum's media arts center and several California cable operators creates programs for both museum exhibition and cable presentation.

An organization that also continues to straddle the two worlds is the New Orleans Video Access Center (NOVAC). NOVAC was in business long before cable came to the land of Mardi Gras. The media center has enabled the production of a range of socially conscious and artistic video work that is subsequently used in a variety of settings—from cable and public television to social service agency waiting rooms. When cable was first introduced in New Orleans in 1986 a generous access allowance was set aside for public access. Although the city's franchise mandated the establishment of an access center paid for and operated by the cable company, NOVAC receives general operating support as well as production grants from the city's franchise fees. Even though equipment use is free at the cable company's access center, there are strict limitations of the amount of time an individual or group can use it, as there are at most access centers—a system designed to ensure availability to all comers. "Many people producing for cable come to NOVAC and pay for equipment," says NOVAC director Karen Kern. According to Kern, the majority of NOVAC's output is shown on cable, but they continue to support a variety of independent media projects.

In other major cities where access coexists with media arts centers, the phenomenon has taken a different turn. Cable access in the city of Boston has been in operation for several years. From the start, the type of equipment available and the orientation of the access organization, Boston Neighborhood Networks, have been towards professionally-produced community news produced at neighborhood-based studios—in no sense posing a competitive threat to the income-producing facilities geared toward media artists at the Boston Film/Video Foundation (BF/VF). Further, the access corporation requires that it retain copyright on work created with its equipment, an affront to almost all independent videomakers and artists. However, late in 1988, across the river in Cambridge, one of the country's last major cable franchises was finally up and running. According to Anne Marie Stein, executive director of BF/VF, the new state-of-the-art equipment at Cambridge Access, under the management of longtime media activist Irwin Hipsman, is beginning to take its toll on rental revenues.

This potential for competing interests is highlighted in a recent survey by Maryland Arts Council staffer Ann McIntosh, which indicated that 95 percent of those who identified themselves as independent producers in Maryland rent their equipment from cable access centers. McIntosh's survey, part of a project funded by the National Alliance of Media Arts Centers, was an attempt to ascertain the level of interest in the creation of a media arts center in that state. "Real bridges are being built," McIntosh said. With this initial finding, she advised that starting a media arts center built around a program of equipment access would not suit Maryland at this time.




**Access Columbus Television in Columbus, Ohio, is considered one of the most sophisticated access channels. It is also functioning more and more like a producer-oriented media arts center in a city that lacks one.**

Courtesy Access Columbus Television

MARY ESBJORNSON, director of the New York Media Alliance, identifies historical similarities between the early days of media art organizations in New York State and the situation faced by many cable access centers today. In the 1970s, when the New York State Council on the Arts' Media Program saw a 10 fold leap in its budget, "there was lots for everyone. The money came first and justification came later," says Esbjornson. "People didn't yet know how to talk about video or to judge its quality." But now, she says, "things are tighter and people are questioning what is art, making the people who get grants more accountable." The Media Alliance is a coalition of media organizations and videomakers in New York State, established as a network, advocacy, and service group. Included on its board are artists, representatives of media arts centers, *and* cable access producers.

One of the Media Alliance's tasks, Esbjornson believes, is building relationships between different groups, including cable and the arts groups. But this has not been so easy. "There's not much openness," comments Esbjornson, who produced an arts program for cable in 1986 in Minnesota. "If you're serious about the craft, it's almost impossible to work through the access system." Although distribution is high on the agenda for independent producers, she adds, "People have tended to fear that a cable showing would taint their work. They have fears that it will be associated with amateur video." Nevertheless, Esbjornson advises that if screenings of independent work are carefully prepared and packaged for cable, independents will want to have their work included and audiences will want to watch. As an example, she cites Rochester, New York's *No-TV* program, comprising independently-produced tapes, packaged by the Visual Studies Workshop (VSW), and Manhattan's Channel L series *Video Spectrum*. In both instances the series contents are thoughtfully selected and the artists are paid.

More skeptical about the future of such relationships, former director of Atlanta's IMAGE media center Robin Reidy finds that artists and serious independent producers are not emerging from cable access. On the other hand, she says, "People who consider themselves professionals don't even look at cable access. Access is never going to be what artists need. It doesn't have artists in the organizations pushing them to be responsive to the artists." Reidy, who has also served on the board of the Atlanta cable access organization People TV, tempers her pessimistic prognosis with the comment, "People find the vehicle to get their vision across. Sometimes it's access and sometimes it's the media arts."

But Bob Doyle, director of VSW's media program and producer of *No-TV*, doesn't see any difference. He said he's tried to take the word "art" out of his definition of independent video and considers VSW's facility a media access center, not a media arts center. "We have people doing art, documentary, and public access. People don't insist on a hierarchy: 'I'm an artist, and you're only doing public access.' I don't want to see those distinctions," says Doyle. Instead, he describes the problem in Rochester as one of development of a community of producers. "Development is far more important than the notion of quality." The cable access facility in Rochester run by the cable company offers free production and editing equipment, but, as at NOVAC, Doyle says that there are more people paying to work at VSW than are working at the cable company. He hopes to negotiate with the city to move the cable access facilities to VSW, a contract that he projects could entail a budget of as much as $200,000 per year.

Another New York State-based venture—representing a second generation of public access experimentation—is the network of access producers and access centers that have cooperated to make the *Deep Dish TV* series. Although proclaiming themselves the first national public access program, *Deep Dish* is not pure public access. Many of the shorts and excerpts from longer works shown in the series may be produced through local access operations by volunteers and are subsequently distributed via access channels, but a number of the tapes included are made by self-identified professional media artists. Also, each *Deep Dish* segment is produced and/or curated by independent producers.

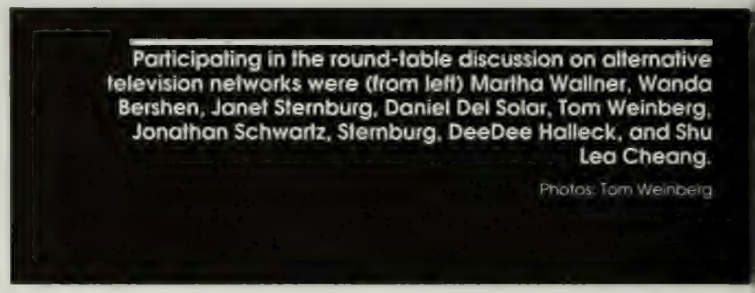
*Deep Dish* is a remarkable undertaking, accomplished by bridging independent media arts and cable access structures. Considerable support comes from funders whose sympathies have been cultivated by the media arts community and who see the possibility of expanding distribution of independent media. Besides the ambitious scope of each individual program in the series—structured around such themes as Central America, AIDS, the farm crisis, popular culture, etc.—*Deep Dish* has attempted to reach far-clung audiences by using satellite delivery. *Deep Dish* organizers and participating producers around the country also encourage local cable access operations to schedule companion pieces from their communities before and after the satellite feed. Now preparing its third season, *Deep Dish* also distributes tapes by means of old-fashioned tape bicycling and has published two catalogues with extensive contact lists in order to encourage links between access producers and programmers. *Deep Dish* is an outgrowth of the widely circulated public access program *Paper Tiger TV*, headquartered in New York City but which has acquired a national—even international—reputation for its scathing and often outrageous critiques of the mass media. But *Deep Dish* has established a separate identity and matured rapidly, as is evident in their decision to hire a professional staff and take on the grueling labor of long-term fundraising.

DRAMATIC CHANGE IS AHEAD for the cable access movement and the organizations it has spawned. Many of the original access groups may not survive. Those that find themselves thrust into competition for the limited funds available for nonprofit activities will find themselves questioning, and even tinkering with, their founding principles. If free speech and diversity of ideas are the driving forces behind access, its proponents must fight to build institutions where those values are reflected in the group's designated mission and their actions. Similarly, media arts centers trying to be all things to all people will abandon standards necessary for the advancement of the art. If both kinds of organizations—access and arts—can create partnerships which accomplish mutual goals, they'll be further ahead. And if they can work separately and together on expanding the diversity of television made and seen in this country, the difficult work of survival will be worthwhile.

*Tom Borrup has been executive director of Intermedia Arts Minnesota since 1980. He has been involved in cable TV access and independent media since 1974 and is former editor of the NFLCP's* Community Television Review.

# UTOPIA NOW

DeeDee Halleck



Participating in the round-table discussion on alternative television networks were (from left) Martha Wallner, Wanda Bershen, Janet Sternburg, Daniel Del Solar, Tom Weinberg, Jonathan Schwartz, Sternburg, DeeDee Halleck, and Shu Lea Cheang.

Photos: Tom Weinberg

In March 1989 a small group of people met in San Diego, California, to mull over the overtly utopian notion of setting up an alternative television network. This wasn't the Trilateral Commission, but there was in the group a unique combination of experience and resources. The initial call for the meeting asked:

"How can we help each other to create alternative television for the nineties—a television that is human, responsive to important events and which utilizes the vast reserves of creativity that exist in this country and throughout the world?

"Is it possible to create some sort of hybrid network that uses UHF, low power, public access, school channels and public TV stations? That could share promotion, programming satellite time, expertise?"

Seated around the table at the Media Center at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) were:

**Wanda Bershen:** former programming director at CUNY-TV in New York City from 1986 to 1989, collaborator with Britain's Channel Four for cablecast of programs in the U.S.; now the director of the National Jewish Archive of Broadcasting at the Jewish Museum in New York City.

**Alan Bloom:** director of broadcasting and associate chair of the Department of Communication Studies at Cal State, Los Angeles.

**Shu Lea Cheang:** independent producer currently coordinating a five-hour video compilation of material on popular movements in Asia, *The Revolution Will Be Televised.*

**Michael Couzens:** director of the Center for Low Power Television, author of the Federal Communications Commission's rule-making on low power television; lawyer for many community stations throughout the country.

**Daniel Del Solar:** director of KALW, a San Francisco radio station owned and operated by the Unified School District.

**Sherman George:** director of the Media Center at UCSD and director of the proposed University Television Station.

**Addi Gevins:** public radio producer; organizer/producer of a series on the Bill of Rights.

**DeeDee Halleck:** cofounder of *Paper Tiger TV* and *Deep Dish TV*; associate professor, Department of Communications, UCSD.

**John Schwartz:** founder of KBDI-TV in Broomfield, Colorado, president of the Instructional Telecommunications Foundation, space real estate expert.

**Janet Sternburg:** author, filmmaker/programmer, and senior program advisor in media at the Rockefeller Foundation.

**John Walden:** video producer, organizer of *Paper Tiger* Southwest.

**Martha Wallner:** cofounder of the Deep Dish Public Access Satellite Television Network, coordinator of the Latin American Video Archive Project at Ramapo College, public access organizer.

**Tom Weinberg:** founder/producer of *Image Union*, a 10-year-old series of independent work on public television in Chicago, cofounder of the Center for New Television, producer of the new series *The 90's*.

No grandiose plan, no blueprint for the future emerged from the meeting, but I think that all of those present were energized by the discussion. The light in our eyes as we left the room Saturday afternoon was neither from the San Diego sun, nor from 24 TV sets in the Nam June Paik installation in the doorway of the media center. A new network? A sort of *Whole Earth* television channel? Tomorrow? Next year? The underground of the air? At the very least, a commitment to work together and continue to share ideas and experiences. In that spirit, I have edited this very condensed version (transcribed with care and understanding by Kelly Anderson) from the nine hours of discussions audiotaped by Daniel Del Solar.

□ □ □

**John Schwartz:** My goal is to start a TV network. I've always hated television. I especially hate the form of television that's prevalent in the U.S. So it's a goal expressed in a negative way, but we want to provide an alternative to television and a voice for people that don't have it.

**Martha Wallner:** What we want are more democratic media. And the bigger the outlets, the bigger the audience, the better. The bigger we are, the more visible we are. It's hard to see an ant. To get different voices out there, some radical political content, different kinds of representation, very different kinds of forms for TV, TV from other places, made by nonprofessionals. That is an aspect of access that we like and that we'd like to keep.

**DeeDee Halleck:** I'd like to see an alternative television that can respond to events. A responsive network.

**MW:** To inspire people to produce television that they wouldn't produce otherwise. They'll find the resources.

**Tom Weinberg:** That's what John Schwartz calls The Force. We're counting on it for *The 90's*, which we hope will be a long-term satellite-distributed network program service, 90 minutes a week of independent programming [each of the first 13 programs will be an hour]. We want it to be a model, a sampler of what a larger scale program service would be: alternative kinds of TV from lots of different sources, a compilation of commissioned pieces, and relics from the video past.

**Daniel Del Solar:** The Unified School District, where I work, is about to start a cable channel with Viacom in San Francisco. I'm here for help, to learn. I share John's dream, a second public interconnect system. In radio terms there is NPR, National Public Radio, which connects 330 radio stations and subsists on tithes paid by the stations. Now a second national network, American Public Radio, is functional. A second programming public TV channel is missing. If we are not the people to do it, we are maybe the people who are looking down the road to see how it might be done.

**Michael Couzens:** It is very striking when you look at public broadcasting

# Networks for the Rest of Us



that there's a tradition of having two or three or five radio services. Such a tradition does not exist in TV, but with the proliferation of cable and other alternatives it's worth thinking and talking about.

**Shu Lea Cheang:** I'm involved in networking with Asian-Pacific independent producers, who may be on the other side of the world, but they are very influenced by American network programming. They have no access to alternative programming from the U.S. We hope that there's some way we can exchange programs in the near future.

**Janet Sternburg:** I'm the media advisor to the Rockefeller Foundation's Arts and Humanities Division, and I've also produced, written, programmed, and taught film. The Foundation as a whole, as most of you know, is committed to supporting international and intercultural work. So this kind of effort is aligned with its purposes. And with my own long-standing commitment as well. It's an idea whose time has come, and I'm here to work on making it work.

**Sherman George:** I run the Media Center here at UCSD. This university was the lottery winner for a low power ticket that's presently tied up because of the [California/Mexico] border region, but we're going to make every effort to put a station on the air. It will be a community station, run by a board of community people. Combining the low power broadcast radius and assuming good cable carriage, we have the possibility of serving 300,000 people. We intend to program 12 hours a day and initially rotate four-hour blocks in different parts of the day.

**Wanda Bershen:** At CUNY-TV we run the same kind of block, four times throughout the day. At first CUNY only cablecast a calendar of events and apparently Manhattan Cable threatened to take the station back. The university decided to hire a staff to program it. There are only three people doing a ridiculous amount of work. It runs seven days a week, eight in the morning until midnight. On the weekdays, a four-hour block is repeated. We stole from the *New York Times* the idea of special sections: Monday is "Society," Tuesday is "Science," Wednesday is "Public Affairs," Thursday is called "From Abroad"—it's all foreign material, Friday is "Culture." Saturday and Sunday we have "Weekend," and we reprise a lot of programs.

We've used material from Channel Four, from ZDF [German TV] and from the French American Film Workshop. For instance, we've shown *Bandung File*, a public affairs series made by a London company devoted to Third World news and cultural affairs, using a format that includes short news stories and longer special reports on Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America. My goal has always been to provide real diversity—work with very distinct politics, work from non-Western producers, work from independent producers in other countries, as well as from the U.S.

**DDH:** Tonight, Angela Davis is lecturing across the campus. Sherman, if UCSD taped it would you want to share this with CUNY-TV, for instance, and would you charge for this type of programming ?

**SG:** There are a lot of events that go on here that have value. We have a very aggressive and original music department. We have a reputable theater organization. For events done by faculty, the university has some prerogative, because they're funding part of the production. We've worked out a formula that we would use material that belongs to the university on the campus station. If we then sold it to another organization, a percentage of that, above the production costs, would go to the original producers. For an Angela Davis presentation, those terms would probably have to be in her contract to speak here.

**DDS:** The rights issue requires extensive thinking, because each of us, depending on our institutional location, has a different view of it and it cannot be glossed over, because it totally affects what you can consider acquiring.

**MW:** Right now I'm a full-time staff person for *Deep Dish TV*. We were started five years ago by the *Paper Tiger* group. We've had two series, one in 1986, which ran 10 hours, transmitted over 10 consecutive weeks at the same time of day, same transponder, same satellite. And then in 1988 we did 20 hours. It's public access cable. On access you can't have commercials, but no one controls you. In most communities, with a disclaimer, you can show penises or walk on the American flag.

Access producers use community facilities or media arts centers that are subsidized. They make programs with money they get from their other jobs. The important thing is to get their tape out to as many people as they can. *Deep Dish* is grassroots activism, organizing. There is a network of over 300 public access channels who downlink us. It's much more than we ever expected when we first used the satellite. We would have been happy for 50. The point was to reach, in a cost-effective way, more stations than we could afford to bicycle tapes to. We found that public access programmers want progressive programming. They want more controversial programming. They don't care that it's low technical quality; they feel that the content compensates for that. There are also many activist community organizations that want to work with us. In addition to the program producers, we are working with groups who care about the issues our programs address. *Deep Dish TV* is not an end in itself. It's also a means of talking about certain issues and getting people to think about certain issues. The bottom line for us is a more just society, and TV is an important tool for that. Also it's fun.

What we found out, which big business knows very well, is that there is an economy of scale. It costs as much to publicize one satellite transmission as it costs to publicize 30. You have to do national outreach and publicity to programmers, press, and producers whether you transmit one hour or 30. So on a very informal basis we've been approaching people that we think might have programming that complements our goals, and saying, "Do you want to pool resources with us? Do you want to buy a slot on the network?" We've been working out different deals with people. For the last series we worked with two labor unions, a college in New Jersey that had programming



**From *The 90's* pilot, aired last June. Tom Weinberg executive producer, Joel Cohen producer.**

Courtesy *The 90's*

from Latin America, and a group of women producers in Boston that does an annual International Women's Day festival. Depending upon their resources, these groups paid various amounts to get their programming included in a *Deep Dish* series. We were expanding into a kind of a cooperative, like the cranberry coops that John studied.

**DDS:** Cranberry?

**JS:** Cranberry growers market their crop collectively. Ocean Spray is actually a producers' coop. I studied them to see if there was a model for a producers' network. There is a legal way of incorporating and laws for operating producers' coops. Producers' coops are exceedingly democratic, in virtually all ways. And they must be by statute. I looked into this when a group of us tried to organize a coop called *Window* about 10 years ago. We had a big meeting at AIVF; we did a trial satellite transmission. It was a miserable failure because there were so many different people with such widely different agendas.

**DDH:** People eat cranberries only twice a year. How can we have a consistent source of funds and TV space?

**MW:** Public access is an important model. It is an example of how you get corporations to subsidize public efforts. It's making the cable operator return some of their profits to the community, which, in this country, may be the best we can do.

**Alan Bloom:** At Cal State, L.A., we have 24 hours on one channel and 12 hours on another. The students created a media association and went to the student government for funds. Because we're an activity on a campus, we tap money that way. This year they got $10,000. Over the years they've been able to buy themselves a $15,000 DXC 3000 chip-camera system, three-quarter-inch tape machines. We got some arts funding so that we were able to do a full-scale music video with Bobby McFerrin for his song "Opportunity." But the trade-off was to give the record company the rights to distribute it. They don't get paid by the various music video stations, but let them run it for promotional purposes on VH1, for example, which they did.

We collaborated with CUNY-TV on showing the *Bandung File* series that Wanda organized. The series passed 500,000 homes. We bicycled it to the Cal State station in East Los Angeles, and we have an agreement with Choice Cable in the San Fernando Valley. The university can't fill 24 hours. There's not much budget. But working with CUNY-TV enabled us to offer a real variety.

**DDS:** Who chooses the programming?

**AB:** There's not a lot of choice. There's so much time available, we take anything we get. We record all our local programs on VHS cassettes and put them on repeat. It's run by the media department, the instructional resources. They hire students to put the tapes on the machines.

**DDH:** So do you think that station could run *Paper Tiger*?

**AB:** I know the station could run *Paper Tiger*, but you have to give us the dubs for nothing.

**MW:** Do you have a downlink? Could you pick up *Deep Dish*?

**AB:** Yes. But our whole system is based on personal energy. Maybe there are two individuals in the media center who are interested and will actually go out of their way to do anything.

**DDH:** If *Deep Dish* sends out a press release to Cal State and doesn't have the names of those two dedicated people, chances are no one is ever going to get the information.

**DDS:** How do you pay for the rental of the material your show, Wanda?

**WB:** In every possible manner. For one series, a faculty member raised a certain amount of money which included the initial one-time transfer to tape and rental for five Czech films. For others we received foundation grants.

**TW:** What does it cost?

**WB:** Most of the rental rates we pay are equivalent to nontheatrical classroom use, like $200 an hour, sometimes a little more. There may be a trade-off on how many times we can use it, if we do the transfer—what do they need that we can offer that will bring the cash price down? We don't have cash.

**MW:** It's cablecast, but the rental sounds like a regular classroom rental rate.

**WB:** We've created a new category. It's cable nontheatrical classroom. Icarus said to me a while back, when we did our first Channel Four series, that "if we license it to you, it'll get taped, and we lose rentals." But they gave the opening program to us, then it and the series got substantial coverage in the *New York Times*, and I believe their rentals increased. In the case of the German independent film series, we had the complete cooperation of the German cultural service and the German embassy.

**MC:** You're doing all this work, just to put it on one channel in New York City?

**WB:** The stuff is terrific. People call me up from all over the country saying, "Can we show it?" I have to say no. I don't have the rights, because I didn't ask for them up front. Also, we're not set up to become a distribution entity.

**TW:** It's exactly the same as with *Image Union*. We've never gone national for the same reasons. We can't do that and do what we're doing. It's hard enough locally.

**MW:** Most *Deep Dish* producers don't expect remuneration. That's not what they're in this for. It is an evangelical endeavor.

**DDH:** So in that case, the model is not so much commercial syndication, but the evangelicals. Why don't we use the religious broadcasters as our model?

**MC:** Religious broadcasters are very good, if you haven't noticed, they're much better at this than we are.

**TW:** They also have a terrific product.

**MW:** Salvation.

**DDH:** What would be the left-wing version of Jesus TV?

**MW:** A more meaningful life, community, health, peace, justice, things that

# Fin de Siécle TV: *The 90's*

*The 90's*, a new magazine-style program featuring the work of independent producers—amateurs and professionals—begins its 13-week run on November 5. "It's a magazine for the rest of us," says executive producer Tom Weinberg of the show's progressive orientation. The series' one-hour programs will be produced by the Center for New Television in Chicago, where for the past 11 years Weinberg has produced the weekly series *Image Union*. What distinguishes *The 90's* from this and similar independent showcases? "We're inventing something new. Most showcases have finished pieces that fit into a time slot" with an added wraparound, Weinberg explains, "*The 90's* is more crafted, more produced." It will include shorter pieces, excerpts, and even works-in-progress, combining commissioned and acquired works. In format, *The 90's*' mix of reports on current events, assorted quirkier items, and longer, in-depth pieces may have more in common with programs like National Public Radio's *Weekend Edition* than with independent series now on the air. Budget permitting, Weinberg hopes to develop a broad network of stringers across the country—and eventually the world—who will be tapped to produce pieces for the show.

But during its early, leaner stages, acquired work will predominate. What are the producers looking for? "Pieces that are poignant or reflect a particular experience; that are funny, satirical, from an unlikely source, or on an unlikely subject. Work that reveals something about ourselves," Weinberg responds. "It's not a freak show or a goof, but it's not so deadly serious all the time." The series pilot, which was sent out June 25 on the Westar 4 satellite, ran the gamut from serious to silly: from teacher Pat Keeton's footage of the demonstrations at Tiananmen Square and Chuck Olin's work-in-progress on the disappeared in Guatemala to videomaker Nancy Cain's "Surf Report" at Venice Beach and Bill Murray's cameo appearances. Sprinkled throughout were snippets from video archives (which will be a regular feature on the series), including Top Value TV's irreverent coverage of the 1972 Republican convention, Ant Farm's souped-up Cadillac smashing through a pyramid of TV sets in *Media Burn*, and a 1980 conversation with Jim Wright about ethics. "The PBS stations loved this the most. Japanese television, too," Weinberg notes. For his part, Weinberg seems most pleased with the idea of showing excerpts from works-in-progress, which would be a truly innovative step for a television series. Besides providing the show with current footage, says Weinberg, "It's the perfect outlet for people doing important things, who want to get it out there."

As a result of feedback from the pilot, the producers expect to make some changes. While segments will generally remain under five minutes, longer, more substantial pieces may be added to the mix and the pacing modified, becoming somewhat less frenetic. Moreover, Weinberg wants to include more work by women and people of color. The question of adding a host, which the pilot did not utilize, or some other connective device remains unresolved. While this and some other details are still unsettled two months before the kick-off, Weinberg is sure of one thing: "The object is to get so that there's a button many millions can push to get *The 90's*—just like they now get CNN or MTV or Jerry Falwell. How we get there, we're making up everyday."

Weinberg and John Schwartz, who is dubbed "chief bureaucrat" for *The 90's*, have been busy trying to get carriage on both public and cable television. As of September, they have an assured potential audience of at least 400,000 cable households through a barter deal Schwartz has arranged between his company Denver Area Educational Telecommunication Consortium (DAETC) and United Cable. In exchange for granting United Cable the rights to unused time on DAETC's instructional microwave television system, eight of United's cable operators around the country turn over a leased access channel to DAETC. In the beginning, *The 90's* will run full-time on these channels. Beyond this, Schwartz sees another possible 100,000 households if their contacts at local origination and educational and public access channels agree to schedule the series. Even so, 500,000 households represent only one percent of the 50-million homes now with basic cable. While slowly building a network from scratch is one possibility, Weinberg and Schwartz are not adverse to putting *The 90's* on an existing national cable network, and have already had serious discussions with two. If a deal goes through, this would mean a quantum leap to audiences in the tens-of-millions.

The numbers for PBS are harder to gauge. Since the pilot—and series—are being offered for free, the producers have no systematic way of tracking which public television stations carry the show. Some stations tell them, as they are supposed to; others Weinberg and Schwartz hear about indirectly, either through viewers in the area or through program listing services calling up to ask how to describe the show. Weinberg knows of 15 stations that aired the pilot and estimates there were about 20 more.

*The 90's* is currently budgeted at approximately $7,500 per show. "All of the money will show up on television," as opposed to going into overhead, says Weinberg, "and the lion's share will go to the producers." This figure could go up, depending on their success in raising money. Financial support for the series comes a variety of sources. There is the usual combination of foundation and government funding: in this case, $100,000 from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and smaller amounts from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Illinois Arts Council. Matching MacArthur's $100,000 is in-kind and cash support from the nonprofit, Colorado-based corporation Instructional Telecommunications Foundation. ITF is another of Schwartz's enterprises, separate from but closely related to DAETC. While DAETC's license is for a Denver-area educational microwave TV system, ITF owns similar licenses around the country. Some of the revenues raised by ITF from leasing excess airtime on these systems are being funneled into *The 90's*. There is also the possibility of additional income if the DAETC/United Cable deal shifts from a straight barter to a barter-plus-cash arrangement. Schwartz does not hold out any hopes for payment from public television.

A more unusual component of their prospective revenue sources is the sale of VHS cassettes. These are not videotapes of the programs themselves, but rather are other works by the producers seen on the show, full-length versions of the excepts shown, and related material. A printed catalogue of tapes will be ready at the time of the program's premiere and will be advertised on the barter-syndication version, together with commercials for the different tapes in the catalogue. A second version of *The 90's*, made for PBS and therefore containing no advertising, will run an underwriting tag for the videocassette sales. In putting together this first catalogue, Schwartz admits they have been frustrated in dealing with some distributors who either are not equipped or are unwilling to sell in volume at consumer prices—as low as $20. Consequently, the initial catalogue will contain more commercial items, such as silent feature films, than they would prefer. Says Schwartz, "It's difficult to embody the spirit of *The 90's* from commercial tape sources."

Producers interested in submitting work to the television series should send tapes—no phone calls—to: *The 90's*, c/o The Center for New Television, Chicago, IL 60605. For consideration for inclusion in future catalogues, submit work to: *The 90's Catalogue*, Box 6060, Boulder, CO 80306, attn: Laura Brenton.

PATRICIA THOMSON




make heaven on earth.

**JS:** They're selling simplicity, that's one thing. It's a fight against modernity.

**MW:** We don't have to copy the Christian Broadcasting Network. I think there are people that really do want to see new TV.

**JS:** The Christian broadcasters have done that a whole lot better than we've ever managed. They're on the cable, on the satellites. They're moving into feature films.

**DDS:** They're involved in direct response advertising to a very narrow clientele that actually sends them money. There's no reason why we can't do that.

**DDH:** One successful model for us perhaps is the *Whole Earth Catalog*.

**TW:** It is a useful model. They said: "Look, we've made choices, here they are." They even printed their budget: "Here's how our money works. No bullshit, we're trying to survive. We're not hustling you."

**DDH:** I think that speaks to the notion that an alternative network could legitimate everybody—a stamp of approval.

**MW:** They defined their own audience. Like Arsenio Hall, who says there are people who want to watch something else. He's not trying to take Johnny Carson's audience. It's students, gays, and Black people in urban areas that he's after.

**SG:** John Schwartz, you've really thought about this more than any of us. You've eliminated a few of the possibilities. What are some of the visions you have now?

**JS:** I spent years kind of scheming and not doing anything, and that was a real waste of time. I think things that are done in practice are better than things that we only sit around and discuss. What bothers me about the things that we've talked about is they're all subsidized somehow. *The 90's* is subsidized by the MacArthur Foundation and by ITF. Things that endure have ways to pay for themselves. My current enthusiasm is selling video cassettes. If you can sell a thousand video cassettes, which is not that many, you bring in revenue. *The 90's* will try to sell videocasettes and use that to subsidize other forms of TV distribution.

**DDH:** Last spring I went to a meeting on distribution at the New York State Council on the Arts. It was very depressing. I found out that the *What Does She Want?* series, the cassette distribution project that Lyn Blumenthal started at the Video Data Bank, received tremendous funding, subsidies of all kinds, fancy jackets, promos, ads in *Ms.*, mailings to between 5,000 and 8,000 women, but they only sold about 450 programs. They would have had to sell 4,000 to break even, to reach the level of their subsidy.

**JS:** I'd like to know more about that. I make a point of finding out about things that don't work. One thing they *didn't* do is sell the cassettes on television. You should be able to sell TV on TV better than any other way, or so my intuition tells me.

KBDI made a series called *Fueling the Future* about energy issues. It cost about $400,000 to make—expensive for us—and was widely carried on PBS. We put a tag on the end saying, "You can buy these tapes for $50 apiece." Some public TV stations cut the tags off, and so you can't be sure that your tags are running in every place. Still, we've sold $20,000 or $30,000 worth of them off the tag. But people usually buy one. They don't buy a set.

**DDH:** That's what they found out with *WDSW?*—people didn't buy the whole series.

**MW:** Well, that's what she wanted.

**WB:** Who's buying? Institutions, individuals, schools?

**JS:** All, but a lot of the sales are to institutions. KBDI did another show, an oral history of the battered women's movement, and they sold that almost exclusively to institutions. They priced it at $150, which is not a consumer price. They did cheap mailings to shelters and womens' studies programs. And I think they've sold about $10,000. Which is actually not that many tapes. None of these things recovered the cost of production, but on the other hand, they covered a significant amount, 20 to 25 percent.

**MW:** I'm intrigued by the notion of selling tapes on TV. It could work the way it works in radio: you play the music, and people want to buy the record. But you'd need programming that's hot, in an aggressive commercial way.

**JS:** A lot of what I'm trying to figure out is how to sell things that in the conventional world are not considered real hot. I think we're going to make our mistakes.

**MW:** If you do this with *The 90's* that means that all your rights are also VHS distribution rights.

**JS:** We're making what we call the Tape Channel that will run on cable and allow us to sell tapes on eight cable systems. We're able to get clip rights from virtually everybody.

**DDH:** You'll have somebody review the tapes and recommend certain ones?

**JS:** Right. Sort of like combining the Home Shopping Network with Siskell and Ebert. We are actually retailers. For example, Vestron distributes the *National Geographic* programs and sells them to wholesalers, and you can buy them from a wholesaler in Denver and sell them to people directly. Like a catalogue. It's just another outlet. These are 24-hour leased access channels. If you're going to be the Tape Channel, or some kind of channel, you have to be there all the time.

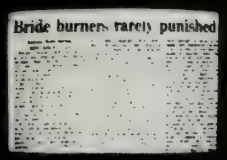
The economics of selling videocassettes are sort of libertarian economics. That should mean that you have a chance to do what you want and recoup your money from it. But in the world of TV economics, that is very rarely accomplished, especially for people like us.

**DDH:** Bart Freidman produced a tape about pigeon racing. He put an ad in the *Racing Pigeon Bulletin*. I think he's made $30,000 from selling 600 copies.

**JS:** So that's the libertarian economics. An individual producer can serve a small but devoted audience.

**TW:** If you want to make homing pigeon tapes. Homing pigeons, golf swings, sure.

**MW:** But how many tapes can you sell of progressive programming at a $7.00 mark-up, and make enough to make more tapes? *Paper Tiger* self-distributes, that's what now subsidizes over half of *Paper Tiger*'s production.






Left three frames: *Wole Soyinka: A Combative Soul*, a portrait of the Nobel Prize-winning writer from Nigeria, originally produced for the British series *Bandung File* and rebroadcast on CUNY-TV in New York City and Cal State, L.A.

Right three frames: *Burnt to Death*, on wife immolation in India, from the *Bandung File* series..

Courtesy Bandung Productions

*Herb Schiller Reads the New York Times*, for instance, has sold at least 70 tapes and several thousand dollars of rentals.

**JS:** At how much apiece?

**DDH:** $100.

**JS:** So it's a fundamentally institutional market, $7,000.

**MW:** But that's gross.

**MC:** One thing that's different now, compared to a few years ago, is that there are important archives of this material. There's great value already in the can, and more is constantly being created.

**JS:** If we get these full-time tape shopping channels, we will do much more sales-oriented kinds of tags. For *The 90's*, there'll also be a public TV version, with just a little tag at the end.

**DDH:** You'd put ads for *The 90's* on the leased access channels and discrete ads for when they play on public TV channels?

**JS:** We'll have an 800 number and say things like, "Operators are standing by...."

**MC:** Where are these leased channels?

**JS:** Some pretty good ones: Denver suburbs; East Valley in L.A.; Oakland County, Michigan (a Detroit suburb); Alameda, California; Hacienda Heights, California; Scottsdale, Arizona; Baltimore; and Vernon, Connecticut. They all have the same owner—United Cable, now a subsidiary of United Artists Entertainment.

**DDH:** Well, supposing *Paper Tiger* wanted you to distribute their tapes, would we pay you a fee?

**JS:** We would get money for every tape sold.

**DDH:** You would take a commission, like a retailer?

**MW:** And who does the shipping and invoicing?

**JS:** There are powerful efficiencies in having a label for a cassette distributor, having a warehouse, having a catalogue, having ads that are placed, and having a full-time staff that does all this and distributes the proceeds.

**DDH:** Like how much would a cassette of a program from *The 90's* cost?

**JS:** *The 90's* probably will have a catalogue, which will have some shows in it that actually occur in the programs in their full length. We'll have other ones where we'll show excerpts. And we'll have others that are similar in spirit or from similar sources that we think people would feel comfortable with because they're comfortable with the feel of *The 90's*.

**DDH:** And how much will the tapes cost? $19.95?

**JS:** Well, I don't know if we can make enough money selling them that cheap. I think we may have to sell them for more.

**WB:** There are record publishers and book publishers who make a living, who are self-supporting, who hardly sell mainstream stuff. How can they do it, and is it possible that we could?

**MW:** Most of the ones I've heard about are subsidized by personal endowments.

**DDH:** South End Press would be bankrupt if they didn't get the subsidies that they get. *Mother Jones* also.

**JSt:** Christian broadcasting has the advantage of being one component within an already existing network which operates in a three-dimensional way to provide services to fulfill people's needs. Television is just an added dimension.

**MW:** The alternative video movement came out of chronicling what was going on in cultural and political movements. When people write about *Deep Dish*, they talk about it as a sixties throwback. But beyond nostalgia, they want to feel connected to the world and to each other again. The most frequent viewer comment about *Deep Dish* is, "Now I know I'm not alone."

**WB:** When I did a series on the sixties, I expected to get the most flack for showing *Winter Soldier*. We did get more calls about that film than any other in the series. It's a somewhat technically crude film made by a collective in 1969 or '70 about a war crimes tribunal and Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Talking heads describe the worst atrocities of the Vietnam War. People thought that it was an amazing film and asked, "Are you going to run it again?"

**DDS:** There is a real hunger. We're saturated with sameness. We know it's there, we know that there's this political opening, and we don't know how to do it.

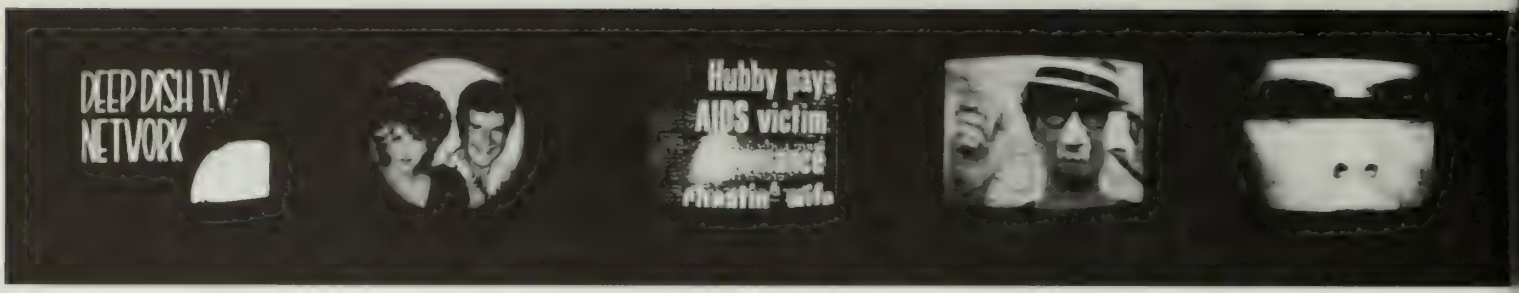
**MW:** One of our original goals at *Deep Dish* was to forge a consortium of social justice organizations. Then we found there isn't a large social movement in this country. There are a lot of issue-oriented organizations, but they're not working together. There are very competitive old wars going on. And most of these organizations are totally mystified by new forms of communication, like satellites. This is going to change, in the nineties. The pendulum's going to swing.

**DDH:** Some organizations are producing videos: GMHC [Gay Men's Health Crisis] in New York, Greenpeace, the United Farm Workers, Madre—more and more.

**MW:** We're talking with those people. But I'm afraid most of them will want something back very immediately—a profile for their organization.

**JS:** There was a direct mail outfit that did work for environmental and social justice organizations that tried to float a consortium of their clients to buy commercial time—a movement strip, a couple of hours a night—on what was then SPN and later became Tempo. It never got off the ground. You have to build the TV machine first. If you have an effective TV mechanism, you can make friends with any movement organization. But the connections are not necessarily that direct. I don't think TV churches are affiliated with real churches, and I don't think the two have a lot of interaction. So you can have a TV movement that has nothing to do with the real movement at all. We can't depend on activist organizations to be our vanguard. We have to do what we do in TV and then build linkages with them in practical ways.

**MW:** *The 700 Club* idea. Aren't there people out there who should be supporting a new television project? I mean individual donors. We want to establish a presence and get the momentum. But we need to talk in a more idealistic way, about what kind of TV people might want to see. Because otherwise, if it's just another slot let's force PBS to do it. If it really gets going and it's popular, the networks are going to do it too. They're going to




do *The 2000s*. They'll never be cutting edge, they won't be as free, but they will scoop it. It happens all the time.

**TW:** It won't be the same. We have something, we will celebrate it and put it out there the best way we can. And it's valid, and it's *not* their network.

**MW:** I guess I'm not sure what "it" is.

**TW:** It's an orientation, a set of values.

**DDH:** An article in *Current*, the public broadcasting trade journal, discussed the struggle of CPB [Corporation for Public Broadcasting] and the independents. They said that CPB has a problem defining who the independent community is, but the independents never have any problem knowing who the independent community is. The people who are doing that lobbying to set up the IPS [Independent Production Service, recently renamed the Independent Television Service or ITVS] know what "it" is.

**WB:** There's going to continue to be—from *Paper Tiger* and *Deep Dish*, from *The 90's*, from IPS, from the thousands of independent producers making interesting new television—for the next 100 years they are going to keep on doing interesting work. The question is, how can we get the window for seeing the stuff?

**DDH:** What is the structure? How can we insure that it actually is different, that it's not Eurocentric, not patriarchal. What would be the way to insure a genuine diversity?

**SLC:** Diversity at the top. It has to be producer-oriented and representative of a broader constitutency. *Deep Dish* has helped to identify many communities of producers. We can help each other, complement each other.

**DDS:** We need a sharp horse trading lawyer, we need a program acquirer who knows about rights and has contacts and an eye. We already have the community-based toes-in-the-mud people who know how to make programs and who have the vision to make programs. I'm tired of having so much product locked up in closets and being shown to three people at a time in our own homes, wearing out the heads of our own VCRs. It's crummy.

**TW:** If suddenly Gene Scott died [Gene Scott is a religious broadcaster with a 24-hour network] and left us his transponder, we could develop pretty quick. If it dropped into this room, we would feed it and nurture it. We'd divide it up very nicely and, in three or four months, have an alternative service.

**WB:** There's 90 minutes of *The 90's* and an hour of *Paper Tiger/Deep Dish*, and another hour of what would be acquisition material...so a three-hour block.

**MW:** And we'd share mailings, publicity, etc.

**WB:** Well, that's an alternative program service.

**TW:** The transponder we can get, but we need to organize a way so everyone can see it in their house. With *Deep Dish* we have public access channels. And we're also arranging for leased access channels around the country. University stations need to be consorted with. PBS stations need to be dealt with. Those are all delivery points.

**WB:** We're talking about an alternative system, not one weird thing stuck in the middle of standard TV fare. It needs a strong profile and identity.

**MC:** As I see it, there are four building blocks: The first is a strong station group or flagship station. Then there's the financing, ongoing. Then there's the hit program. And then there's...I guess we'd call it bureaucratic politics. If you have all of those, you can do it, I think. Instead of looking for one key, you have to analyze all those keys and figure out what is the strong anchor for a station group? Where are the moneybags? What is the potentially good program?

**WB:** That's a tall order.

**JSt:** Which one, for us, comes first?

**TW:** What is out there? Are university TV stations our station group?.

**SG:** Absolutely, but they are run by the most retro people around.

**MW:** A lot depends on the community. Peralta College Television serves Oakland, Berkeley, Piedmont. It does incredibly progressive programming. At Cornell, for example, Richard Herskowitz programs the access channel. Ithaca is a university town with an important community of people. Richard runs the film society, which is for both the university and the entire community. His television work is a direct extension of that.

**DDH:** Wayne State University has a certain number of hours on public television in Detroit. Francis Shore, a local professor, put on a *Paper Tiger* series as a college course. He's part of a larger consortium of southern Michigan, which is a conservative group of people, but he can get channel space on every station where there's a member of the consortium.

**JSt:** Those are the kinds of people who could change your opinion of university programmers, Sherman.

**MW:** Then there are the telecommunications classes and communications classes. Many are very corporate: teaching you how to use satellite teleconferencing. Some university media centers operate as commercial enterprises. I know of one that downlinks and edits programs for the military on a commercial basis. It's frightening. But there are teachers in those departments who want to make an intervention, want to do something else. If we can connect with them, it will have interesting ripple effects.

**DDS:** Right now we have little individuals, hanging on by their fingernails, at the tolerance of the cable operators, or the university. If it gets too hot or too weird, the boot will come down on us and we'll have to let go of that channel and that movement. The train will no longer be there.

**WB:** But if they have a consortium, an organization, they can have their own clout. But until people see a model, they don't know what they're missing. And that's the way to organize them.

**MW:** Tom and John and Joel [Cohen] are talking about public TV stations (there are 306 of them). We're talking about public access and university access and some LO [local origination] channels. If we're on satellite, we can be downlinked by any of them. Pulling the downlinkers into the production helps too. The more the network is participatory, the better. For instance, the access programmers that receive *Deep Dish*, in addition to seeing the best of access, they may even see themselves. The vanity factor in video is important.

**JS:** We're not Rupert Murdoch, we're not even CPB. We have a lot less money, and a lot less power, than those organizations do. Our odds of becoming a major factor in the media scene are therefore much lower than



Left three frames: *AIDS: Angry Initiatives/Defiant Stategies*, organized by John Greyson for the second season of *Deep Dish TV* cable series.

Right three frames: *The Border: Where Do You Draw the Line?*, coordinated by DeeDee Halleck and Dan Martin for *Deep Dish TV*.

Courtesy Deep Dish TV

those other entities. But we've got to use the resources we do have.

**MW:** Do we want a book, or do we want a long-term magazine?

**JS:** I want a long-term magazine, but I spent a long time convincing myself that we needed more things than we really needed to get started. We're not going to wait for a million dollars. We want to get on as many PBS stations as we can.

**MC:** Public broadcasting has its own politics. Wading through that molasses is a problem.

**MW:** I think Pacifica is a much better model.

**TW:** My answer is get it up on the satellite. All the time.

**MC:** Specifically, the next steps are an inventory of available products and what people want to watch, a coop structure for distributing programming, and a representational structure that can make policy decisions.

**MW:** What about the IPS?

**JS:** I don't think anything that they're doing is in competition with what we're doing, and it would really be a benefit to work with them as closely as possible.

**JSt:** I have enormous respect for what they have accomplished. They now have political savvy and muscle.

**WB:** We need more information about university stations—names, addresses, figures.

**MW:** Ask for a commitment: "We have a consortium. Do you want to be a member? This is what we're going to do. We're democratic." It is also a way for the university people to identify each other.

**DDH:** When you talk to universities you should ask them whether or not they would pay a fee to subscribe or be part of this. And ask, "What kind of programs do you make?" We need to make it two-way.

**MW:** If there is something worthwhile, people will find the means. Each will find a way: In one case, they'll get it from the general budget of the university. In another, they'll use acquisitions money or from the media center. In another case, they'll try their arts council or find a private donor. We're talking about The Force again. That's why *Paper Tiger* is more dynamic than a lot of producer groups, because we have a weekly outlet. So what if it's just public access? It's on television in New York City, one of the largest markets in the U.S.

**John Walden:** As a producer, the cooperative model that Martha talked about is very attractive, and it makes me want to work as an organizer to get programs on the networks that I'm near. I think that's very powerful.

**JSt:** It seems to me that there are two ideas here. One is the "first date" idea, *Deep Dish* meets *The 90's*. I'm not sure how many other people that are here are going to get that involved in that. The other is the grassroots cooperative consortium that both gets programming and gives programming.

**MW:** I think we're beyond the first date. The more people we can work with, the better off we are. GMHC is a really good example. They put a lot of money into making media. Their weekly show *Living with Aids* is on leased access in Manhattan—an interesting, good, useful show. They're one of the few organizations that has decided to use media and use access. I know that they already are interested in working with us, pooling resources, helping pay a fee to basically get some of the publicity. There's another series, *South Africa Now*, that is produced in New York and would gladly join with us. We have a lot to offer.

**JSt:** There are less glamorous and more nuts and bolts kinds of issues that we need to talk about. How do you organize this consortia? You're talking about going to universities?

**WB:** Universities and media centers, perhaps.

**JSt:** And these people pay $2,000 a year?

**WB:** Whatever.

**MC:** Are media centers generating programming?

**JSt:** There's a lot of program-making coming from media centers.

**WB:** They're doing terrific stuff all around the country. SWAMP [South West Alternate Media Project] does a series in Texas, *The Frontier* series that Media Study in Buffalo used to put together, the Long Beach Museum's cable program, there are dozens....

**DDH:** Their $2,000 tab would be from their grants?

**WB:** That's the discussion. We would say, "Here's a possible fee structure, how do you think you could relate to it? Do you think you could get money from your arts council, whatever, to do this, to make the local national and benefit by having national publicity?"

**JS:** Well, the people who have tried to create this in the abstract have all failed. But you have a different chance and a better chance to make it work, because you can add on a few groups at a time. If you're happy with the results, you can add a few more and try to build a series.

**TW:** It took the Discovery Channel three years to go from 156,000 homes to 38 million, with a lot of money, structuring, and planning.

**DDH:** To me, the real key is the core of university stations. I think that's an important element. That's a core group of potential outlets.

**MW:** Maybe the organization should be as simple as sharing equipment. Here's a farm metaphor: You grow beans and I grow sweet peas, and we both use a tractor. Rather than raising money for five years to try and buy the tractor, five of us got the money together in one year and bought the tractor. The tractor is a neutral thing, like the transponder is a neutral thing.

**DDH:** We shouldn't forget the so-called "public" satellite network. Should the independent community lobby to have a structure for free access to Westar?

**MC:** Sure, CPB needs to rebuild and there are good reasons to have real public access to the federal satellite system.

**DDH:** When is the rebuilding going to happen?

**MC:** In the next four years. They think the satellites are going to die in the next year or two.

**MW:** It looks like we're in the wrong business.

**DDS:** The replacements are on the way.

# LOUISIANA MEETS LOWER EAST SIDE: NEW ORLEAN'S IN THE FUTURE PERFECT FESTIVAL




**The first edition of New Orleans' In the Future Perfect festival, a retro-perspective of eighties filmmaking, included such innovative works as Todd Haynes' low-budget feature *The Karen Carpenter Story*, a searing look at the mythos of the star system.**

Courtesy filmmaker

Jay Murphy

Opening two months after the first New Orleans Film and Video Festival only underscored the semiotics-in-the-raw nature of the 34 short films and experimental videotapes in the first annual In The Future Perfect festival. Whereas the "official" festival was organized around a tribute to Louis Malle and his films, especially the New Orleans-based *Pretty Baby*, starring Brooke Shields as the teenage prostitute, In the Future Perfect's three-day program culminated in the searing deconstruction of the mythos of the American star-system in films like Todd Haynes' *The Karen Carpenter Story* and the death-punk, scurrilous send-up of the Elvis Presley myth in John Moritsugu's *Der Elvis*.

Designed as a "retro-perspective" of early and mid-eighties filmmaking, the event's organizer, independent video/filmmaker John Dooley, emphasized the festival's themes with films grouped within brackets like "Women's Rites," "Deconstructions," "Abnormalcy: Myth and the Narrative," as well as sections of animation and political documentaries on African social/political upheavals. In an interview, Dooley said that the festival was intended as a "challenge to the existing order" in the region, the long-dominant pattern of hierarchical thinking and factionalism he found here on his arrival from New York—not only in the art world or film and video presentations, but in the larger socio-political field as well.

In the Future Perfect reflected the fruitful groundwork laid by many filmmakers in the regions of sexual politics and sexual representation. Barbara Hammer and Paula Levine's *Two Bad Daughters* was one of the most intriguing examples shown at the festival. Hammer has made bold films and videos in formal terms, making use of postproduction optical printing and other techniques, while braving feminist orthodoxies about sexuality and behavior. In *Two Bad Daughters* Hammer and Levine examine the omnipresence of patriarchy and its intrusions into women's daily lives, while countering it in the course of their video. Using wordplay and exaggerated color, they construct a language and knowledge that claims, "This is not an analysis...jam the theoretical machinery/leave an empty space." Hammer, whose picture of patriarchy runs from psychoanalysis and print-culture to bondage practices, is still able to make rebellion joyful and entertaining, surely an accomplishment for a lesbian-feminist film artist in the eighties.

One of the surprises of the festival were the miraculous super 8 animations of Lewis Klahr, whose first part of his projected tetralogy *Tales of the Forgotten Hour, The Morning Films*, was shown here. This series of three films celebrates metamorphosis and liberates an uncanny visual language of dream logic. Klahr's method involves glueing bits of film onto clear leader, then forcefeeding this footage through a projector, and rephotographing it. His technique emphasizes roughness, the handmade rawness of approach, which in turn perhaps adds to the surreality of the scenes, to the dramatic disjunction when a character leaves its environment, or when live action intrudes. *In the Month of Crickets* was the last installment in this first chapter, featuring vintage forties and fifties cut-out figures in *noir* environments acting out rituals of sex and surveillance accompanied by the constant chirping of insects. Klahr's distant lands evoked the Surrealists' "marvelous" in fluid motion.

In the Future Perfect's selection of documentaries included Laurie Dunphy's *Lived in Quotes* filmed during the 1986 state of emergency in South Africa, and Craig Baldwin's multifarous *Rocket Kit, Congo* about Mobutu and the CIA in Zaire. Dunphy's film uses repetition, slow motion, blurred pans, and contrasts the flat, unsuspecting voice of a white tourist guide with the rich, metacommentary of a Black woman. Baldwin's film is more wide-ranging in its scavenging of documentary effects, using extensive black and white found footage with informative voiceovers in the usual compilation documentary style, as well as color satirical sequences and cartoons. Baldwin has an excellent eye for the kind of detail that makes compilation films ring true—as when he captures military painters obliterating the words "U.S. Air" from a plane's fusilage, newly delivered to Mobutu courtesy of his stateside sponsors. Both films are brave attempts to preserve some relevance for documentary work in a deeply depoliticized culture with a highly centralized, entertainment-oriented film distribution system. Both filmmakers address the perhaps central question in Dunphy's film, that of voice and perspective, often not satisfactorily dealt with in

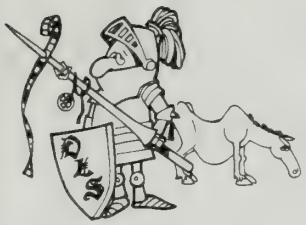
films made within the Marxist montage tradition. Dunphy's film is both jarring and musical; Baldwin's borders on entertainment.

Many of the intertwined themes of decentered and Other voice, sex role deconstruction, fetish demolition—as well as a shot of a body being thrown into a ditch from a Nazi concentration camp film which appeared in no less than three films in the festival—are found in the festival's final feature *The Karen Carpenter Story*, like several of the other films presented, a production of Apparatus Films in New York. Already one of the most acclaimed, low budget ($15,000) films in recent memory, *The Karen Carpenter Story* skillfully combines simulation, docudrama, and fictional reenactment, in addition to documentary-style commentary and footage that describes a larger social context (Nixon, music charts, Vietnam, consumer culture, the bombing of Cambodia). Telling the tale of the Carpenters' packaging and Karen's premature death due to anorexia nervosa, Haynes' use of Barbie dolls was certainly a stroke of inspiration; the dolls encapsulate Karen Carpenter's prepubescent, manipulated sexuality, her status as consumer item and fantasy. Haynes ties together the role of the Carpenters as the soothing duo whose songs we were inundated with while the bombs continued to fall on distant peasant lands. But Haynes' film, full of pathos and a discernible empathy for Karen Carpenter and her plight, is best in using the Carpenters as a rather grim *mise-en-scène* and soap opera to foster an examination of the role played by the idealized white, straight, adamantly middle-class American family in the culture of death which produced Vietnam, and today produces its low intensity equivalent in Guatemala, Salvador, and Nicaragua.

This near-desperate but often effective if eclectic pillaging of film form was characteristic of much of the work screened at In the Future Perfect, which included animated music videos like Henry Jones' *Soul City* and the subverted pornography of Uzi Parnes' *World Peace*. Keith Sanborne's fast-acting, montaged critique of modernist film practices *Something is seen, but one doesn't know what* is situated as a response to Eisenstein, Debord, and American TV commercials. If the festival seemed to draw a narrow bead at times on gritty New York angst or the Brown University Semiotics Department, it more than made up for it in the energy and variety of the films presented. At their best, the work shared the brilliant intertextuality of one of the jewels of the festival, Michael Wallin's *Decodings*, and the collapse of compulsive sensibilities that it represented in its conclusion, "driving repeated figure eights near the Canadian border." In the Future Perfect showed more experimental work in film and video than has been seen in the area in some time, in the hope that the contagion will spread.

*Jay Murphy edits* Red Bass *magazine in New Orleans and is writing a biography of filmmaker Emile de Antonio.*


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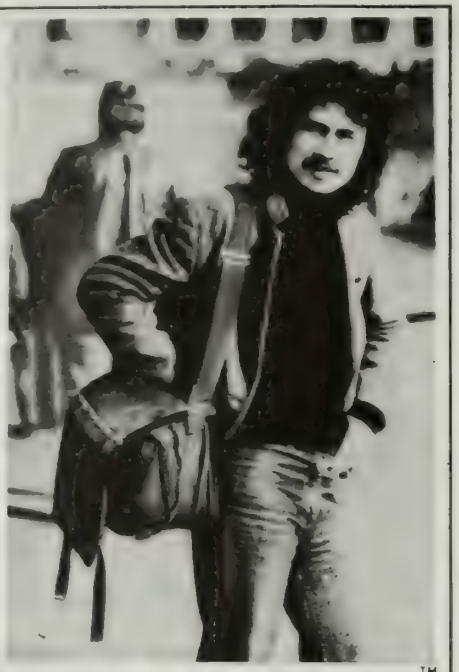
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## IN BRIEF

This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the **FIVF Festival Bureau.** Listings do not constitute an endorsement & since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. If your experience differs from our account, please let us know so we can improve our reliability.

### Domestic

AFI FEST-LOS ANGELES, Apr. 12-26, CA. Now 4 yrs old, noncompetitive, invitational fest presented by American Film Institute focuses on int'l cinema, incl. several world & US premieres. Last yr 120 films from 42 countries shown. Large section devoted to U.S. ind. film, incl. features, docs & shorts. 1990 program also features sections on Latino cinema & will offer seminars & workshops. Fest recently received official recognition from FIAPF, int'l film festival governing body. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, preview on 3/4". Deadline: Dec. 15 (shorts); Jan. 10 (features). Contact: Ken Wlaschin, AFI-Fest, Manor House AFI, 2021 N. Western Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90027; (213) 856-7707; telex: 9103339625 LAFEST.

AMERICAN FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, May 28-June 2, CA. One of oldest (now in 32nd yr) major competitions for nontheatrical film & video in the US, fest annually screens over 1000 entries & selects about 450 to participate. Selected works judged by juries throughout country; winners in each of 88 cats receive Blue & Red Ribbon Awards (Blue Ribbon winners eligible for nomination for documentary/short Academy Awards). Other awards incl. the Emily (Best of Festival) & John Grierson Award (to 1st time film/video director). Competition cats (which contain sub-cats) incl. shorts, arts & culture, humanities, world around us, human concerns, concerns & controversies, children & young adults, instructional media, special competitions, film/video vanguard, feature, professional, health care professionals, home video, student. Attended by media buyers & programmers from universities, public libraries, media centers, museums, school systems, hospitals, businesses, as well as distributors, producers, media critics & other media professionals. Program also incl. several workshops & awards ceremonies. Held this yr at Westin St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco. Also features market exhibits w/ materials from distributors, producers, publishers, etc. Entries must be produced &/or released in US btwn Jan. 1, 1988 & Dec. 30, 1989 & available for general distribution. Entry fees: $50-155, based on length (discounts to AFVA members). Formats: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2" (home video cat); prescreening on 16mm, 1/2". Deadline: Jan. 5. Contact: American Film & Video Association, 920 Barnsdale Rd., Suite 152, La Grange Park, IL 60525; (312) 482-4000; fax: (312) 953-0257; telex: 403681 AFVA.

BROOKLYN ARTS COUNCIL FILM & VIDEO EXPOSITION, February, NY. 23rd annual competition for ind. film & video artists. Juries consist of members of National Academy of Television Arts & Sciences as well as filmmakers, critics, distributors & curators. Last yr 125 works screened & awards presented in cats incl. out-

standing animation, narrative film/comedy, narrative film/drama, doc, experimental & student. Public screenings held at various NYC locations, incl. MoMA, Jefferson Market Library, BACA Downtown, Millenium, Brooklyn Museum. Entries must be under 60 min. Formats: 16mm, 3/4"; preview on 3/4" & 1/2". Entry fee: $25. Deadline: Dec. 13. Contact: Tom Wachunas, BACA, 200 Eastern Pkwy, Brooklyn, NY 11238; (718) 783-3077/783-4469.

CLEVELAND INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL. March 29-April 8, OH. Now in 14th yr, fest screens over 40 feature & doc films from 15 countries for audiences of 21,000. Over 100 titles in lineup. Program incl. several premieres as well as an Independent Films Series, focusing on shorter works by young & student filmmakers; independent features programmed in main section as well. Many filmmakers attend w/ films. No entry fee. Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Deadline: Dec. 31. Contact: David Wittkowsky, Cleveland International Film Festival, 6200 SOM Center Road C20, Cleveland, OH 44139; (216) 349-0270; fax: (216) 349-0210; telex: 980131 WDMR.

MARGARET MEAD INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL. Dec. 4-7, NY. The dates for this yr's festival have been moved from September to December. For details see "In Brief," May 1989.

SACRAMENTO INTERNATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL. March, CA. Debut yr of competitive fest accepts films/videos in several cats: features, TV commercials, shorts (fiction, doc, industrial, comedy, music, experimental, student, animation, education in all formats). Ind. films form backbone of programming. Work must have been completed after Jan. '88 & will be judged by film critics from local newspapers & commercial writer/producers from CA TV stations. Entry fees: $15-40. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 8mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Jan. 31. Contact: John Van Ouwerkerk, codirector, Sacramento International Film & Video Festival, 1700 L St., Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 447-5247.

SANTA BARBARA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL. Mar. 2-11, CA. 5th annual noncompetitive event. Each yr fest highlights films of particular country. Audiences reached 15,000 for 1989 edition, which incl. several premieres. Program also incl. special programs, gala events & workshops. Fest looking for "highly commercial, quality films." Formats: 35mm, 16mm; preview on cassette. Deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: Phyllis de Picciotto, artistic dir., Santa Barbara International Film Festival, 1216 State St., Suite 201, Santa Barbara, CA 93101; (805) 963-0023.

## Foreign

BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 9-20, W. Germany. One of the most important fests on int'l circuit for independents. Berlin, celebrating its 40th anniversary, offers independent film artists hospitable atmosphere at both fest & concurrent film market. Known for efficiency, fest programs large number of int'l ind. works, incl. several US productions. Over 7000 film industry professionals from every continent, along w/ enthusiastic audience, attend. Films programmed in 6 sections, each w/ own character & organization. International competition screens 70mm & 35mm feature-length films, as well as 35mm shorts under 15 min. Entries must be produced 12 mo. prior to fest, not participated in other int'l competitions or fests & be German premieres. If accepted, German subtitles necessary. Selections for this section made by fest director


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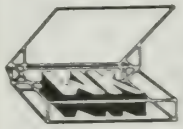
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FIFARC INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ON ARCHITECTURE, URBANISM, AND URBAN ENVIRONMENT. Mar. 20-25, France. Fest (see March 1989 *Independent*) postponed until March (due to office renovations) & will accept entries through Dec. Temporary offices: 17/19, Quai de la Monnaie, B.P. 85, 33024 Bordeaux Cedex, France; tel: (56) 947905; fax: (56) 914804. For forms & information, US rep Sylvie Thouard may be contacted at: 184 Thompson St., #6G, New York, NY 10012; (212) 254-2857.

KATOWICE INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF THE MOUNTAIN FILM, Feb. 27- Mar. 4, Poland. 2nd yr of competitive fest for short, medium & full length films & videos that portray facets of mountaineering. Official fest guests receive hospitality. Work must be produced after Jan. 1987. Awards: Grand Prix, Festival Audience's Award, Special Distinction, other awards to producers, directors, camerapeople. All entries receive certificate of participation. Formats: 35mm, 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Nov. 30. Contact: Miedzynarodowy Festiwal Filmów Górskich, Klub Wysokogórski w Katowicach, ul. Chopina 2, 40-043 Katowice, Poland; tel: 832 562340; telex: 325631 alm pl.

## Renee Tajima

Image life as a palm, rooted in the same spot for upwards of 100 years. Around you, the environment of people, buildings, vehicles, air, sound, and attitude evolves into forms previously unseen. Despite the surrounding movement, you do not change, but persist, and life around you adapts to your presence. From southern California, longtime video artist Art Nomura has created a 30-minute audio/visual poem entitled **Las Palmas de los Angeles (The Palms of the Angels)**. Shot on location throughout the area, it combines music, poetry, interviews, and video elements into a multi-layered hybrid that uncovers the 98 percent of life that does not consist of high drama, conflict, and tragedy. Rather, the tape resuscitates the dignity of existence as an alternative to our presumed need for violence, sex, and improbable resolution. For Nomura, the palm tree is both a symbol of the "good life" of southern California as well as the endurance and persistence that counterpoints the influences of "the sitcom/police story/TV news/sporting event mindset and timeframe." The tape speaks to the ecology of the urban dweller, human and otherwise, and exposes the basic symbiosis between plant and human. *Las Palmas de los Angeles*: Art Nomura, 4106 W. Jefferson Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90016; (213) 731-1362.

Before leaving for a stay in Mauritania, videomaker Lauren Goodsmith completed **Becoming Bilingual**, a two-part documentary on the experiences of non-English-speaking students in New York City schools. *Ambos a Dos*, the first part of the series, follows a young girl from Puerto Rico through her first year at an innovative bilingual school in East Harlem. Part two, *Newtown High*, offers a composite profile of the bilingual experience for students from many different countries. Set at a remarkably diverse school in the borough of Queens, young people from Taiwan, Cuba, the People's Republic of China, Afghanistan, and elsewhere talk about their experiences and the bilingual services offered in several different languages. *Becoming Bilingual* is intended to help dispel widely-held misperceptions about the goals and daily workings of bilingual programs and emphasizes the importance of these services to newly-arrived students who must continue their studies while adapting to a new language and way of life. The program also includes a section on the origins of bilingual education legislation as an equal rights issue. *Ambos a Dos* and *Newtown High*, completed with the assistance of the Astraea Foundation, are available as a package or separately. *Becoming Bilingual*: University of California Extension Media Center, 2176 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley, CA 94704; (415) 642-1340.





Shot in and around Philadelphia, **Rites of Passage** is a film about personal growth and change. John Campbell, who has been making super 8 films since childhood, created the three-and-a-half-minute work on super 8, then transferred it to video. Like the alchemical symbols that punctuate each segment, *Rites of Passage* moves through several progressions—Darkness/Light, Death/Transformation/Rebirth, and Childhood/Puberty/

**Stream-of-consciousness and dramatic narrative are combined in John Arthos' short film *High Places*, the story of a drug addict who bottoms out, then returns to reality.**

Photo: Rodney Chapman

**Joanna Priestly's new film, *She-Bop*, is based on a poem by Carolyn Meyers about power, rage, and the feminine aspect of spirituality.**

Courtesy filmmaker

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Adulthood—to parallel the processes that accompany an individual's passage from one phase of life to another. In the film, Campbell experiments with degraded images and features an original score composed and performed by Joseph Waters. *Rites of Passage* premiered at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the International House. *Rites of Passage*: John Campbell, 4605 Chester Ave. #A202, Philadelphia, PA 19143; (215) 222-5961.

"Her eyes are spinning/her hair is writhing/She is dripping blood and milk, and she is shrieking!/ Banshee, Gorga, Lilith/Do you know her now friends? She is coming for you!" **She-Bop** is Joanna Priestley's new film about power, rage, and the feminine aspect of spirituality based on a poem of the same name by Carolyn Myers. "And even her the mountain is alive, deep inside. Listen! She's going to blow! Why weren't you listening!" *She-Bop* combines character and experimental animation, using both drawings and puppets to illustrate the narrative. "Can you take it?/She's already taken you/She's off the wall, out of the bag, on the loose." The central character of the eight-minute, 16mm film is an unusual representation of Kali, or the crone side of the triple Goddess. "Aya, Anna, Oona, Inanna/Maybe you don't even want her/But once you've heard her name, she's inside you forever." *She-Bop*: Joanna Priestley, 1801 N.W. Upshur, Portland, OR 97209; (503) 236-5070 or 274-2158.

Fred Marx's 31-minute personal documentary **Dreams from China** premiered in October at the New York Film Festival. Shot in 1983-85 while Marx lived and worked in Tianjin and Beijing, the film reflects a personal odyssey of nearly six years. In it, the filmmaker confronts the historic political and economic changes he experienced in China, "The Four Modernizations" and "The Spiritual Pollution Campaign." Assembled in collage form, *Dreams from China* contains disparate original elements, including manipulated super 8 images, slides, 16mm film, Chinese newspaper and magazine articles and photos, intimate interviews with citizens, diary excerpts, Chinese poems, maps, and music. The film seeks to raise issues of personal conscience operating in a foreign land—when it is appropriate to speak out and when it is not—and provides a backdrop to current events in China. *Dreams from China*: Fred Marx, 2538 W. Shakespeare, Chicago, IL 60647; (312) 278-8278.

Doomed. Bourgeois. In love. Such is the premise for writer-director Whit Stillman's new film **Metropolitan**. A group of college-age children of the formerly upper class spend the twilight hours of Christmas vacation together. Following every early evening party or dance they attend the group regroups, usually in the sprawling, old-style Park Avenue apartment of Sally Fowler. By accident they bring in a West Side "radical" named Tom. Though a former private schooler himself, he is hostile to all they stand for. It is the excessively popular and glamorous Serena Slocum, Tom's romantic interest, who attracts him into the fold. Others include bookish Charlie Black, young femme-fatale Cynthia, and rich, dangerous Rick von Sloneker looming in the background who acts as an agent of disintegration and decline. Part drama and romantic comedy, *Metropolitan* portrays the surviving remnants of a world described by F. Scott Fitzgerald in *This Side of Paradise*. *Metropolitan*: Westerly Film-Video, Box 51, Prince St. Sta., New York, NY 10012; (212) 979-7354.

**Lighthearted Nation** is the first long-form piece by Washington, D.C.-based videomaker Jim McKay. Two years ago, McKay set out to make a documentary about the *Duplex Planet*, an enigmatic, small-press magazine that had been published since 1979. The magazine featured interviews and conversations with the residents of the Duplex Nursing Home in Massachusetts, as well as artwork, poetry, and music reviews. Imagine a 70-year-old man reviewing a song by Captain Beefheart or an 80-year-old writing poems about trips to the moon, hot dogs, or rat bait. McKay's documentary built upon these incongruities and became a program about five men whose days are filled with silence, cigarettes, and

***Metropolitan*, a dramatic film by Whit Stillman, looks at the surviving remnants of the upper class world described by F. Scott Fitzgerald in *This Side of Paradise*.**

Courtesy filmmaker

memories until someone, anyone, shows up and lets them talk, draw, or sing. Available on VHS and one-inch tape, *Lighthearted Nation* also includes an eight-minute tribute to the poet Ernest Noyes Brookings. *Lighthearted Nation*: C-Hundred Film Corp., Box 1108, Washington, D.C. 20013-1108.

Gary is a 39-year-old transsexual who has been convinced since childhood that he is a woman trapped in a man's body. He finally decided to begin the extraordinary process of changing his sex. But before he could be accepted for sex-reassignment surgery, Gary had to prove that he can successfully live and work as a woman, 24-hours a day, for at least one year. **Metamorphosis: Man into Woman**, a documentary work-in-progress by Lisa Leeman and Claudia Hoover, follows Gary as he learns how to be a woman. When the filmmakers began shooting in 1986, Gary looked like an average man. But, three years later, he has made the transition to a new identity as Gabby, on the job, at church, with family and friends. We see Gabby's struggle for acceptance as she endures electrolysis, plastic surgery, psychological counseling, behavior therapy, and the reactions of those around her. *Metamorphosis* is being completed with a grant from the American Film Institute Independent Filmmaker Program and has been picked up for distribution by Filmmakers Library. *Metamorphosis*: Filmmakers Library, 124 E. 40th St., New York, NY 10016; (212) 808-4980.

The mass media's tendency towards oversimplification and sensationalism often leads to a negative image of poor neighborhoods. Videomaker Linda Swartz attempts to offer an alternative perspective in **Columbia Point**, a 28-minute documentary about a public housing project in South Boston. Swartz documents the daily lives of Columbia Point's residents during its final years before redevelopment as Harbor Point, a luxury community. Created from a montage of large format black and white slides and narrated by a collage of tenant's voices, *Columbia Point* is a personal essay on a national issue, the state of public housing in the United States. The tape is accompanied by a written essay on public housing by Marie Kennedy, associate professor at the University of Massachusetts Center for Community Planning. *Columbia Point*: Intermedia Arts, 425 Ontario St., SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 627-4444.

Ever since her first published work during the 1960s, poet Lyn Lifshin has written virtually nonstop, publishing more than 80 books, editing three major anthologies of women's writings,


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giving over 700 readings, and winning dozens of awards. **Lyn Lifshin: Not Made of Glass** is producer-director Mary Ann Lynch's film portrait of the poet, exploring her origins, technique, and survival as a writer. The 55-minute documentary goes behind the scenes at Yaddo, the artists' retreat, at the Caffe Lena, and in Lifshin's upstate New York home, with appearances by William Packard, Ed Sanders, Joseph Bruchac, and Janice Eidus. *Not Made of Glass* was produced with assistance from the Brooklyn Arts and Culture Association, Helena Rubenstein Foundation, New York University Tisch School of the Arts, Poets & Writers, and Club QE2. *Lyn Lifshin: Not Made of Glass*: Karista Films, Box 423, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866; (518) 584-4612.

Atlanta-based filmmaker John Arthos is now in postproduction on **High Places**, a 20-minute short that juxtaposes stream-of-consciousness and dramatic narrative to tell the story of a drug addict who bottoms out, then returns to reality. Says Arthos, "I built the film around the idea of the sequence of experiences that mitigate against the chances of the rehabilitating abuser. Through the cumulative frustrations the problem itself has built, there is an enormous weight that hangs over the recovery, and the peculiarly poignant loneliness of someone who must confront—in sobriety—twice as much as what caused them to begin taking drugs in the first place." The film, based on interviews with rehabilitated abusers and their families, depicts the social pressures that magnify the struggle to return to normalcy. It is being completed with assistance from the Southeastern Media Fellowship Program and the Fulton County Arts Council. *High Places*: John Arthos, Box 383, Atlanta, GA 30301-0383.

## ATTENTION AIVF MEMBERS

The **In and Out of Production** column is a regular feature in *The Independent*, designed to give AIVF members an opportunity to keep the organization and others interested in independent media informed about current work. We profile works-in-progress as well as recent releases. AIVF members are invited to submit detailed information about their latest film or videotapefor inclusion in **In and Out of Production**. Send descriptions and black and white photographs to: The Independent, 625 Broadway, 9th floor., New York, NY 10012; attn: In and Out of Production.

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# CLASSIFIEDS

The Independent's **Classifieds** column includes all listings for "Buy • Rent • Sell," "Freelancers" & "Postproduction" categories. It is restricted to members only. Each entry has a **250 character limit** & costs **$20 per issue.** Ads exceeding this length will be edited. Payment must be made at the time of submission. Anyone wishing to run a classified ad more than once must pay for each insertion & indicate the number of insertions on the submitted copy. Each classified ad must be typed, double-spaced & worded exactly as it should appear.

Deadlines for **Classifieds** will be respected. These are the 8th of each month, **two months** prior to the cover date, e.g., November 8 for the January/February issue. Make check or money order—no cash, please—payable to FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.

## Buy • Rent • Sell

VIDEO PRODUCTION PKG for sale. JVC KY 2700 camera w/ 2 bats & ac; BVU 100 w/ tc gen, porta case, 2 bats & ac; 2 lavs; 1 Nakamichi shot gun mic; Shure M67; Miller fluid head; good condition. $3000 or b.o. Erik Lewis Productions (718) 965-0268.

OFFICE FOR RENT: 2 rooms & reception/secy area, share conference/screening rm, fully furnished, air cond., hi fl, Village/river views, terrace, $1450/mo. incl. electric, phone, typewriter, copier. Word processor, addit. rooms opt. 6 mo.-1 yr sublet (212) 206-1213.

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CINEMATOGRAPHER w/ feature (4), doc, commercial credits avail. for film or video projects of any length. Personable, w/ strong visual sense & excellent lighting. Own equipment at a reasonable rate you can afford. Call for demo: Eric (718) 389-7104.

TRANSCRIPT SPECIALIST: Transcripts from audio tapes, speedy turn-around, specializing in documentary. References: Kevin Rafferty (*Atomic Cafe*), Robert Stone (*Radio Bikini*). $2.50/page. Disk copies available. Call for arrangements. (407) 645-2638.

NEED ORIGINAL MUSIC for your films? Juilliard Composer & ASCAP winner will enhance your film w/ creative orchestral or electronic scoring. The music makes all the difference. We are SMPTE/MIDI ready! Call Alexander at (212) 799-8330.

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FILM EDITOR: Documentary, educational or dramatic film. New York City, New Jersey or Philadelphia area. Call Jack Walz (609) 893-7817.

EXPERIENCED ATTORNEY to care for your personal & business related legal matters. General practice includes negotiation & review of contracts, litigation, real estate, negligence & medical malpractice. Free consultation. Peter Foster (212) 254-9368.

SCREENWRITER sought for low budget feature. Must have talent for suspense dialogue. Will provide scene by scene breakdown. Fee payable on delivery or deferred w/ points. Send writing sample & bkgd to: SilverKnight Productions, 220 Fort Salonga Rd, Northport, NY 11768.

TRANSCRIPTION service. Fast, accurate. Call (212) 463-9221.

MO FILMS accepts feature-length screenplays in all genres for development & production. Send w/ SASE to Box 2088, Hollywood, CA 90028.

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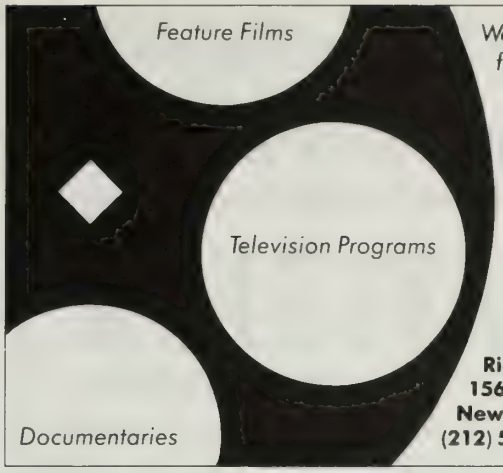
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**FOR INFORMATION, SEE PAGE 39.**

# NOTICES

**Notices** are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. **The Independent** reserves the right to edit for length.

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## Conferences • Workshops

AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE Fall seminars & workshops. Los Angeles: Advanced Acting, Nov. 4-Dec. 2; Adaptation, Dec. 16; TV Producing, Nov. 2-Dec. 7; Music in Movies, Nov. 11; Motion Picture Development, Nov. 18; Breaking into Comedy for Writers & Performers, Dec. 9; Costume Design for Film & TV, Dec. 9. New York City: Audition Techniques, Nov. 11; Art of Film Direction, Nov. 11 & 12; Breaking into Film, Nov. 4; Washington, DC: Entertainment Law, Nov. 5; Irving, TX: Feature Film Finance, Nov. 4; Job Search Strategies for Entertainment Profession, Nov. 18. Contact: Public Service Programs, AFI, Box 27999, 2021 N. Western Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90027; (213) 856-7690 or (800) 999-4AFI.

BOSTON FILM/VIDEO FOUNDATION workshops beginning Nov.: 16mm sync sound, screenwriting, digital video effects, video paint systems, MIDI & multi-track track recording & more. 10% discount for BF/VF members. For registration, contact: BF/VF, 1126 Boylston St., Boston, MA 02215; (617) 536-1540.

DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY TV: Basic TV Prod. Workshop, every Thurs. eve., 3 sessions. Free. S-VHS Editing Workshop, weekly, Nov. 20-Dec. 11. $80. Contact: DCTV, 87 Lafayette St., New York, NY 10013; (212) 966-4510.

FILM ARTS FOUNDATION workshops: Portrait & Dramatic Lighting Intensives, Nov. 11 & 12; Off-line Video Editing, Nov. 11; Producing a Low-Budget Feature Film, Nov. 15 & 16; Super 8 in the Video Age w/ Brodsky & Treadway, Nov. 18. Contact: FAF, 346 9th St., 2nd fl., San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 552-8760.

FILM/VIDEO ARTS courses & workshops: Grantwriting, Nov. 27-Dec. 18; Basics of Doc. Video Prod., Nov. 1-Jan. 17; Intro to 3/4" Video Editing, Nov. 11 & 12, Dec. 2 & 3; Advanced 3/4" Video Editing, Nov. 18-26, Dec. 9-17; Audio for Video, Nov. 14-28; Advanced Techniques: Amiga Computer in Video, Nov. 15-Dec. 20; Intro to Digital Effects, Nov. 14-Dec. 19; Prod. Mgmt., Nov. 2-Dec. 14. Contact: F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9361.

NO-BUDGET FILMMAKING in NYC. Workshop hosted by Apparatus Productions, Nov. 14, 7:30-10 pm, at Anthology Film Archives. For filmmakers making 16mm narrative shorts, workshop covers budgets, insurance, location agreements, casting, unions & more. $20 advance/$25 at door. Admission incl. materials packet. Contact: Christine Vachon (212) 219-1990 or James Schamus (212) 749-8939.


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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN fall series: How to Finance Film, Video & TV, Nov. 11-12, Viscount Hotel, Atlanta. How to Succeed in the Film Industry, Nov. 11-12, Sheraton Crowne Plaza, Orlando, FL & Dec. 2-3, Holiday Inn Downtown, Dallas. Producing Ultra-Low & Low Budget Features, Nov. 4-5, Civic Ctr. Campus, Milwaukee, WI & Nov. 18-19, Holiday Inn Central, Washington, DC. Making a Good Script Great, Nov. 18-19, Washington, DC & Dec. 2-3, Orlando. For registration call (414) 227-3200 or (800) 222-3623.

## Films • Tapes Wanted

FILM CRASH seeks independent films for NYC & LA screenings. Call (212) 673-3335, (718) 636-5496, (213) 939-8422, or write: Film Crash, 423 Atlantic Ave. #4A, Brooklyn, NY 11217.

RE...VIEW seeks info on tapes & films on 1992, 500th anniversary of "Discovery of the New World." Re...view is group of video producers, writers & artists who question "celebration" of anniversary & seek to examine alternative perspectives through regularly published newsletter. Contact: 1992 Re...View, Box 801, New York, NY 10009.

SOUTHERN CIRCUIT seeks artists for touring exhibition of ind. film & video. 6 artists will travel 9 days to 7 southern states & present 1 show per city. Send only printed materials, incl. resume & publicity for 1st round of selection process. Deadline: Jan. 15, 1990. Contact: South Carolina Media Arts Ctr., 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201, attn: Susan Leonard, exhibitions coordinator.

UNDERGROUND COMEDY: Working title for new TV series in preprod. Will feature ind. film, video & animation for broadcast or cablecast to nat'l market. Weekly 1/2 hr shows will consist of sketch comedy, commercial parodies, political satire, animation & original forms of comic expression. Entries: 30 sec. to 3 min. Licensing fee: $100. Contact: Editel/Boston, Underground Comedy, 651 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02215-3278.

VIDEO WITNESSES: Festival of New Journalism, sponsored by Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Ctr., seeks tapes produced w/ consumer video equipment on social, civic & political events. Send tape of any format, max. 20 min., w/ SASE & $5 shipping/handling fee for tape return. Deadline: Nov. 20. Contact: Video Witnesses, Hallwalls, 700 Main St., 4 fl., Buffalo, NY 14202; (716) 854-5828.

## Opportunities • Gigs

EMERSON COLLEGE: 2 tenure-trk positions open for Video Prod. beg. 1/1/90 or 9/1/90. Strong studio prod. experience desirable; MFA or PhD required for one position. Contact: Michael Selig, Mass Comm. Div., Emerson College, 100 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02116.

PENN STATE UNIVERSITY, School of Communications: Tenure-trk assistant or associate position in film & video production. Qualifications: ind. filmmaker w/ strong background in cinematography, proven teaching ability & ability to contribute to broad intellectual & creative life of interdisciplinary communications school. Salary appropriate to qualifications. Starting date: Fall 1990. Appl. deadline: Nov. 1, 1989. Send letter, professional & academic resume & 3 references to: Jeff Rush, Film & Video Program, School of Communications, Penn State University, Box E, 201 Carnegie Building, University Park, PA 16802.

SPECTRUM COMMUNICATIONS: New African Amer.-owned & operated 24-hr cable channel has job openings at all levels. In need of org. to build its prod. facility on Long Island. Contact: Clyde Davis, Spectrum Comm., 21 Bedford St., Wyandanch, NY 11798; (516) 491-7774.

## Publications

LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN: Directory of Resources, compiled & edited by Thomas P. Fenton & Mary J. Heffron, now avail. $9.95. Contact: Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 10545.

NEW ENGLAND FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS Touring Exhibitions avail. for rental: Celebration of Black Cinema V, programmed by Pearl Bowser & Julie Levinson & South Africa Tapes: Living in a State of Emergency video installation by Bonnie Donohue. Contact: NEFA, 678 Massachusetts Ave., Ste. 801, Cambridge, MA 02139; (617) 492-2914.

PANDEMONIUM ISSUE 3: Freaks, Magicians & Movie Stars, now avail. Features John Waters, George Kuchar & Kenneth Anger, among others. $15. Contact: John Stevenson, publisher, 171 Auburn St., Ste. 11, Cambridge, MA 02138.

SOUTHERN AFRICA MEDIA CENTER 1989-90 catalog now avail. Free. Contact: Southern Africa Media Ctr., California Newsreel, 149 9th St., Rm. 420, San Francisco, CA 94103; (415) 621-6196.

## Resources • Funds

COMMUNITY FILM WORKSHOP: 1989 Build Illinois Filmmakers Grants available to IL filmmakers who are CFW members & working on noncommercial, noninstructional 16mm film projects. Appl. deadline: Nov. 1. Contact: CFW, 1130 S. Wabash Ave., Ste. 400, Chicago, IL 60605; (312) 427-1245.

ELECTRONIC ARTS GRANTS PROGRAM provides finishing funds of up to $500 to NYS artists for completion of audio or videotapes, computer-based sound or image works & exhibition, plus small number of research projects aimed at advancing electronic arts. 3 appl. cycles/yr. Also, presentation funds to NYS nonprofits to assist w/ presentation of audio, video & related electronic art. 4 review cycles/yr. Contact: Sherry Miller Hocking, Electronic Arts Grants Program, Experimental TV Ctr., 180 Front St., Owego, NY 13827; (607) 687-4341.

ERIK BARNOUW AWARD presented by Org. of Amer. Historians recognizes outstanding reporting or programming on network or cable TV, or in doc. film, concerned w/ American history, study of Amer. history &/or promotion of history as lifetime habit. Only films & tapes released on or after Jan. 1, 1989 eligible. Deadline: Dec. 1. Submit 1/2" cassette to each member of award committee: Marilyn Mellowes, Comm. Chair, 190 Lexington Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138; Thomas Cripps, Morgan State Univ., Baltimore, MD 21239; Leon F. Litwack, Dept. of History, Univ. of CA at Berkeley, Berkeley, CA 94720. Label all entries: 1990 Erik Barnouw Award Entry. Contact: OAH, 112 N. Bryan St., Bloomington, IN 47408-4199.

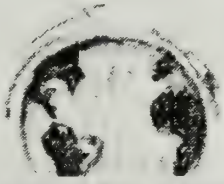
INTERMEDIA ARTS & Dayton's Videowall Commissioning Project offers $3,000 commission & up to $2,500 for prod. expenses to 2 ind. artists working individually or collaboratively for creation, prod. & exhibition in 32-screen videowall. Access to Intermedia Arts equip. & postprod. facilities & Dayton's Studio 11 postprod. facilities to be negotiated. Deadline: Nov. 15. Contact: Intermedia Arts, 425 Ontario St. SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414; (612) 627-4444.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS: Deadline: Film/Video Production, Nov. 13. Contact: Media Arts Program, NEA, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20506; (202) 786-0278.

RHODE ISLAND STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS: Artist Development Grant, Artists Projects, Arts Programming & Org'l Development deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: RISCA, 95 Cedar St., Ste. 103, Providence, RI 02903.

SOUTH CAROLINA ARTS COMMISSION: Appl. deadlines: Artists Projects, Jan. 15. Contact: SCAC, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201.

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE: Grants Program for scholarship, educ., training & public info in int'l peace & conflict mgmt. Appl. deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: US Institute of Peace, Grants Program, 1550 M St. NW, Ste. 700, Washington, DC 20005-1708; (202) 457-1700; fax (202) 429-6063.

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## CORRECTION

On page 12 in Todd Alan Price and Gary Baddeley's legal article in the August/September issue, "Paying the Piper: Music in Motion Pictures," Louis Jordan should read Louis Amstrong.

## MEMBERABILIA

Kudos to recipients of **1989 South Central States Regional Media Arts Fellowships**: Tori Breitling, *Electric Village*; Van McElwee, *Distance & Refraction*; Enrique Trigo, *Ismael Rivera, a Puertorican Portrait* & Barton Weiss, *Geo Falls in Love*.

Congrats to more AIVF members, winners of **Western States Regional Media Arts Fellowships**: Michal Aviad, *The Woman Next Door*; Lynn Becker, *Cinderella Stories from Around the World*; Betzy Bromberg, *Bliss/Bluff*; Paul Harte, *The Way of the River*; Lynn Hershman, *Desire Incorporated*; Lynn Kirby, *Point of Steepest Descent*; Chip Lord, *Inventory*; Curt Madison, *Memorial Potlatch*; Caitlin Manning, *Sonhos Brasileiros*; Joanna Priestley, *Union of Souls* & Trinh Minh-ha, *Shoot for the Contents*.

***Isadora Duncan: Movement from the Soul***, by Dayna Goldfine & Daniel Geller, received a Gold Award from Philadelphia Int'l Film Festival for Best Doc Video. Congrats.

Congratulations to AIVF member Joan Staveley, whose computer animation ***Broken Heart*** won 1st place for animation at San Francisco Int'l Film Festival & Golden Nica at Prix Ars Electronica in Linz, Austria for a cash award of $24,000.

**Film News Now Foundation** is moving next door to AIVF on Oct. 1. The address will now be 625 Broadway, Rm. 904, New York, NY 10012. Call directory assistance for new phone.

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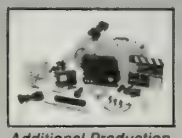
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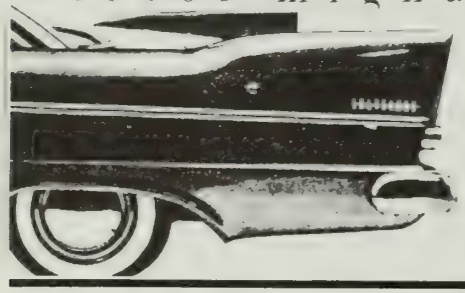
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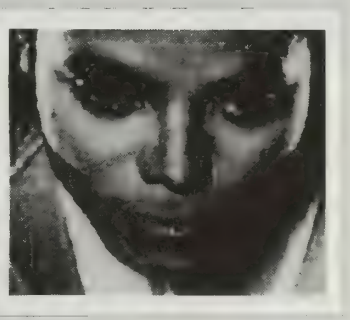
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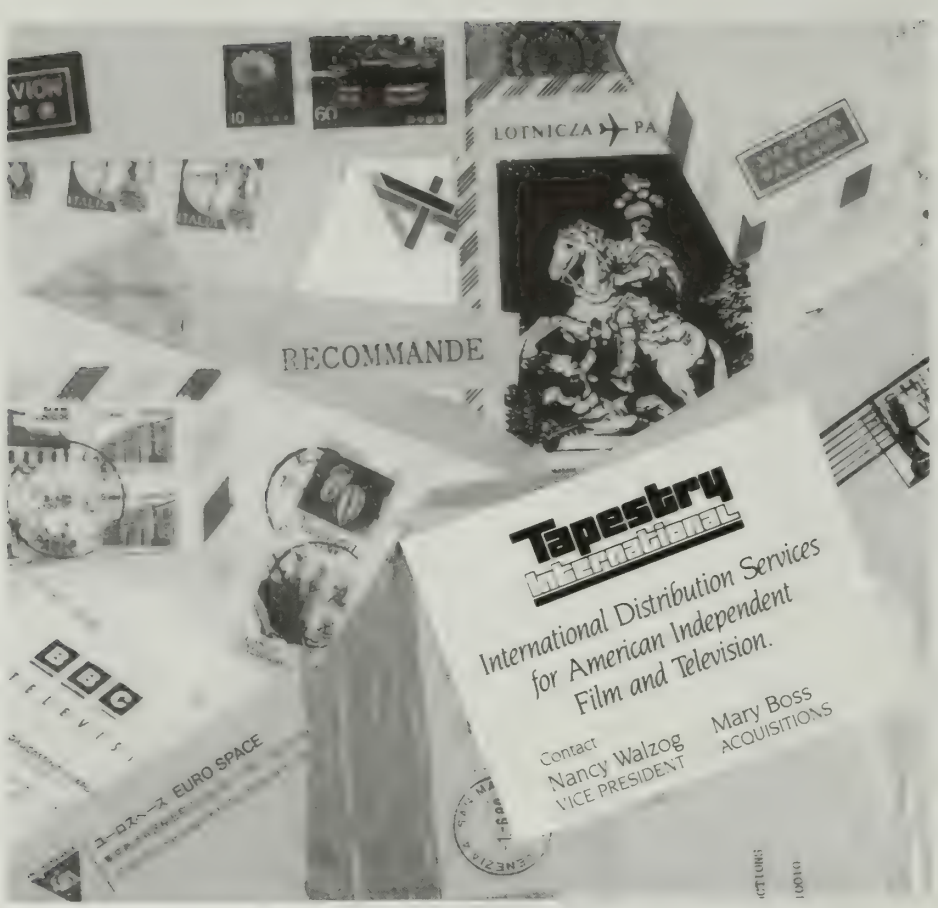


16



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COVER: Ideas for winter reading abound in this issue of *The Independent*, which highlights a variety of new books on media production, history, and theory. Recent publications range from a practical study of the growth of home video in libraries as it affects the markets for independent work to a collection of essays on television as a geopolitical concept. Also reviewed are filmmaker Trihn T. Minh-ha's theoretical essays on postcolonalism and feminism, a monograph evaluating the success and changes in Britain's alternative Channel Four, and a survey of Israeli cinema, viewed in light of the country's politics and culture. Cover photograph from *Global Television*.




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THE INDEPENDENT
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# AIVF

## Books and Tapes

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# TV DIVERSITY: NOT IN NAME ONLY

Public television producers of color take heart; someone is watching out for you. Maybe you didn't think so, given the history of federal funding. There are well over 50 million people of color in the United States. But last year, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting awarded only $800,000 to their five minority consortia—public broadcasting's only national programming initiative directed towards this rapidly growing segment of the population. It took an act of Congress to begin the long process towards redressing this underrepresentation. Under the Public Telecommunications Act of 1988, which allocated $6-million to the Independent Television Service, Congress legislated an additional $3-million for minority programming. Now the consortia and a new National Coalition for Multicultural Media Arts are working to strengthen the hand of minorities in controlling these new funds.

In its August 5, 1988, in its report on the 1988 telecommunications bill, the House Committee on Energy and Commerce acknowledged the progress public broadcasting has made since "Formula for Change," the 1977 study that exposed its failure to involved minorities at all levels, on and off the screen. In 1978, Congress tried to address these concerns by opening station board meetings to the public, stiffening accountability and reporting requirements, and mandating increased employment opportunities for women and minorities. One result was the minority consortia—the Latino Consortium, Native American Public Broadcasting Consortium, National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA), and the Pacific Islander Programming Consortium. African Americans were at first represented by the Columbus, Ohio-based National Black Programming Consortium, but in a controversial move in 1986 CPB awarded the contract to the Los Angeles based-Magalink, which has since gone out of business.

According to the August 5 House report, despite the progress of the last 10 years, the changing demographics of the United States has made public broadcasting's current commitment to minority programming inadequate. It cited, for example, the increasing numbers of new immigrants from the Caribbean, Africa, Southeast Asia, Central America, and the Middle East. Coalition interim steering committee member Alia Arousoughly points out that even within the existing consortia there is no place for the Arab American communities, who received almost no recognition on public television.

Said Senator Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii), chair of the Senate Communications Subcommittee, in his report on the 1988 telecommunications law, "The CPB should continue and expand its work and commitment to the minority communities in these creative ways in order to improve incorporation of minority programming and producers into the system and to help cultivate and further increase the participation of ethnic and racial audiences in public broadcasting." But the language of the bill regarding disposition of the funds is vague, and as Latino Consortium executive director Jose Luis Ruiz points out, the question now is how the new programming initiative will be carried out.

Ruiz and the other consortia members have already formed a task force composed of consortia, independents, and station representatives to survey the field and develop recommendations that would be included in CPB's report to Congress next January. According to James Yee, executive director of NAATA, the consortia launched this outreach process as soon as funds were authorized last year, to insure minority input in the process. Their fears are similar to the early concerns of the National Coalition of Independent Public Broadcasting Producers in relation to independent production funds—that CPB would direct all the new dollars intended to promote program diversity to the stations.

CPB funding for the task force study did not materialize until August 1989, and the group is now racing to complete its recommendations by the end of the year. But some minority producers and media organizations are worried about the station-heavy composition of the task force itself. During the Show the Right Thing National Conference on Multicultural Film and Video Exhibition, held in New York City last September, consortia and Coalition members caucused and agreed to broaden input from the field. The Coalition, which was formed at the Third World Caucus of the 1989 National Alliance of Media Arts Centers conference, has called for the formation of an independent governing body (see box), composed of media professionals and community leaders of color. Coalition members stressed the importance of consultation with national and regional community leaders, who can lend their experience and influence. After all, they represent the constituencies who vote for the congresspeople who allocate the money.

Presently, the Coalition is expanding its membership. CPB president Donald Ledwig has already invited representatives Austin Allen and Loni Ding from the group's interim steering committee to meet and discuss the Coalition's views. The interim steering committee of the Coalition includes Allen (independent producer, Athens, Ohio), Alia Arousoughly (independent producer, Cambridge, Massachusetts), Pearl Bowser (African Diaspora Images, New York City), Margaret Caples (Community Film Workshop, Chicago), Luz Castillo (Cine Accíon, San Francisco), Loni Ding (independent producer, San Francisco), Maisha Hazzard (National Black Programming Consortium, Athens, Ohio), Linda Mabalot (Visual Communications, Los Angeles), and Marlon Riggs (independent producer, Berkeley, California). For more information, contact Austin Allen at (614) 594-2089.

RENEE TAJIMA

## Resolution of the National Coalition for Multicultural Media Arts

Whereas Congress has mandated that the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) increase its support of culturally diverse programming to improve incorporation of minority programming and producers into the system and to help cultivate and further increase the participation of ethnic and racial audiences in public broadcasting, and

Whereas these goals can be achieved only if the minority communities themselves authoritatively participate in the structures created for this purpose,

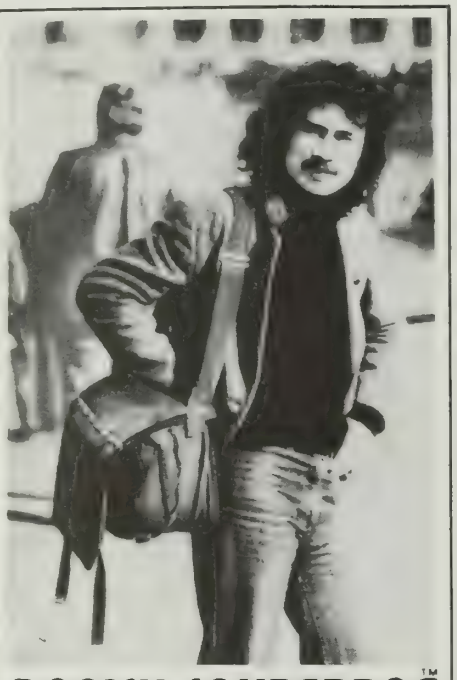
Now, therefore, let it be resolved that the participants at the National Conference on Multicultural Film and Video Exhibition in New York City on September 23, 1989 demand that:

An independent body be formed to establish the governance, policy, and programming initiatives of the (current) $3-million in annual funds allocated by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for the above purposes. This body composed of representatives from the minority media community and minority community leaders shall be nominated by the National Coalition for Multicultural Media Arts (working title for coalition of African Americans, Arab Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, Native Americans, and Pacific Islanders in the media arts field).

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## SETTING STANDARDS FOR FISCAL AGENTS

The relationship between film/videomakers and their fiscal agents is governed by confusing rules (encouraging some to make them up as they go along) and few standards. I know how confusing it is because I work for an organization that runs a fiscal sponsorship program. I am also a filmmaker. Comprehending these arrangements is further complicated by the different names given to the fiscal agent. A filmmaker once asked me, "What's the difference between a sponsor, conduit, umbrella, pass-through, and fiscal agent?" Answer: It's all the same. But the real question for filmmakers is, who are these people and why are they taking a percentage of my hard-earned grant for "administration"? At present, a national task force of independent producers and media arts administrators is deliberating this question, and trying to hammer out new guidelines for fiscal agents in order to maximize the proportion of grant dollars that actually go to the film or video project.

Filmmaker L. Wade Black, project director of the Fiscal Agentry Research Project, launched the study when two fellow Philadelphia filmmakers complained about a tax problem. Their fiscal agents were reporting the full amounts of their grants to the IRS via a 1099 Miscellaneous Income Statement. Consequently, they will be taxed on grant income as personal income, and their project expenses can only be depreciated over a period of several years. The IRS requires nonprofits to report any funds exceeding $600 funnelled to grant recipients by issuing a 1099 form. Black agrees that the portion of the grant a filmmaker takes as personal income should be reported. But, he contends, "It is not clear that grant funds used to cover project expenses must be reported."

In extensive research, Black found that about half of the fiscal agents he surveyed 1099ed filmmakers for the entire grant amount. Others don't bother at all—which is probably illegal—and only a few distinguish between personal income and project expenses in their 1099s. What is clear is that no one seems to agree on the correct procedure for reporting grant income. This includes lawyers, accountants, and funders, as well as arts administrators and filmmakers. To make matters worse, taxes are not the only point of contention. Black poses several vexing problems: Who has fiduciary responsibility to the funder, the filmmaker or fiscal agent? What about issues of liability, copyrights, and use of profits?

The Center for Arts Information made the first attempt at documenting some guidelines for fiscal agents in its 1987 publication *Sponsors: A Guide for Video and Filmmakers*. Their study discussed the different ways fiscal agents operate, but Black and company hope to go further, garner some consensus in the field, and pin down a set of standards and practices. This will be no easy task. In October, a working group met at the New York Foundation for the Arts and the consensus was an agreement to disagree. They plan to convene again. Meanwhile, Black is hoping to get funding for the project, which has undertaken a job everyone wants to get accomplished but wants someone else to do.

RT

## QUAKE, RATTLE, AND ROLL

After the October 17 earthquake, we called a number of Bay Area media arts centers to see how they fared and if any emergency assistance was necessary. Fortunately, most came through the disaster relatively unscathed, with no one hurt and little damage. The San Francisco International Film Festival, however, was left temporarily without a home when the interior ceiling collapsed in the offices it rents in the Fillmore district of the city. According to festival director Peter Scarlett, "The office is a shambles, but it's too early to tell the extent of the damage." Staff members were left stunned but unhurt after the collapse, and the preliminary city survey has deemed the building structurally sound. At this writing, staffers were working at home. Less than two months away from the deadline for finalizing next spring's program, the festival may have to postpone its opening, but will not cancel the show.

"The show must go on" attitude was adopted in the extreme at the Pacific Film Archives, located on the University of California, Berkeley campus in the East Bay. According to PFA director Edith Kramer, the quake did nothing to interrupt a screening of *The First Teacher* attended by about 40 students in an Afro-American studies class. Professor Albert Johnson and a number of other students, though, chose to evacuate the building. Kramer noted that attendance for PFA shows are down considerably and predicts they will have lost their San Francisco audience for some time, due to the closing of the Bay Bridge. Those who are coming to see films are bringing clothes, food, and other supplies for people left homeless by the quake.

Across the bay, Julie Mackaman, development director at the Film Arts Foundation, anticipates the loss of East Bay audiences for San Francisco-based exhibitors, citing the traffic problem for drivers. According to Mackaman, the Bay Area Rapid Transit system is in operation, but many people may not want to take public transportation into the marginal neighborhoods where some media arts centers are located. "In the last quarter of 1989, we may really take a bath on income," says Mackaman. FAF had to cancel classes and seminars during the first week immediately following the quake, as well as the press screenings for its November Film Arts Festival. FAF is housed at 346 Ninth Street, south of Market, a building that also houses Cine Accíon and the

National Asian American Telecommunications Association. Their structure was left undamaged. Nearby distributor California Newsreel experienced some damage to glass, film racks, and shelving, but otherwise remained unaffected. Canyon Cinema distributor Dominic Angerame reports no structural or inventory damage at its offices in the southern section of the city. However, bookings were down during the week after the quake, and their two East Bay-based interns were unable to get to work.

Nonprofit exhibitor San Francisco Cinematheque went ahead with a scheduled George Kuchar retrospective the day after the quake, but had to cancel the second day of the program as well as a screening of reconstructed films from the 1920s organized by Los Angeles filmmaker Bill Moritz. Artistic director Steve Anchor reported an attendance of approximately 140 at the Wednesday Kuchar show, about half of the anticipated audience. The Cinemateque does not have its own theater, and uses other venues, such as the San Francisco Art Institute and Roxie cinema for screenings. From early reports, all these sites are open for business.

Larry Adelman of California Newsreel assesses the impact of the quake this way: "The media fell victim to the script—the script being the San Francisco earthquake, but actually it was centered 90 miles south of here." Contrary to the picture painted by news reports, the destruction was not total, and we were relieved to find so many of our friends and colleagues unhurt. But as Scarlett pointed out, it may be too early to tell the full extent of the damage. According to Mackaman, the San Francisco Arts Commission immediately began surveying local arts groups at the request of the California Arts Council, possibly with the intention of raising emergency funds. Mackaman expects that local philanthropists and volunteers may now reroute their time and money to the more pressing social and economic consequences of the quake. Said Janice Sakamoto of NAATA, which plans to go on with a scheduled premiere of Arthur Dong's *Forbidden City* in November, "Media arts centers? They seem OK. But people are homeless in the streets. That's the real problem here."

RT

## NEW DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OPENS

From the point of view of independent filmmakers, the field of theatrical distribution often looks like a desert landscape of shifting sands. That's all the more reason to note any new initiative that announces a commitment to the exhibition of independent cinema. Last spring a new distribution company was inaugurated in New York City. Paul E. Cohen, founder and former president of Analysis Films, has joined forces with banker Robert de Rothschild and businessman Jim Sterling, chairman of Sterling Drilling





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and Production Company, to open the Aries Film Releasing Corporation, located at 250 West 57th Street in New York City.

While at Analysis Films from 1978 to 1985, Cohen distributed approximately 35 foreign and specialty films. Some of the titles released through Analysis included the Academy Award-winning *Mephisto*, Golden Globe-winner *My Brilliant Career*, and *The Chosen*. Cohen's partners Sterling and de Rothschild have no prior experience but are devotees and supporters of independent film. They became interested in the venture when Cohen approached them about the importance of distributing independent work. The partners then proceeded to secure financing through individuals and limited partnerships, christening Aries in April 1989.

After leaving Analysis, Cohen became executive producer at Moonbeam Associates, a production development company. During his tenure there he produced *America*, directed by Robert Downey and starring Robert Downey Jr. Cohen returns to distribution with knowledge gained from his successful experience.

Aries is specifically interested in representing foreign language specialty films as well as independent U.S. productions—films which, according to Cohen, "have universal emotional content, new current themes, and new kinds of scenarios." Aries is principally seeking feature-length titles, mainly dramatic features, although Cohen states that Aries will also consider feature-length documentaries. The company will concentrate securing U.S. rights, but will occasionally procure world rights with an "eye to succeed in the theatrical venue" for the works it handles.

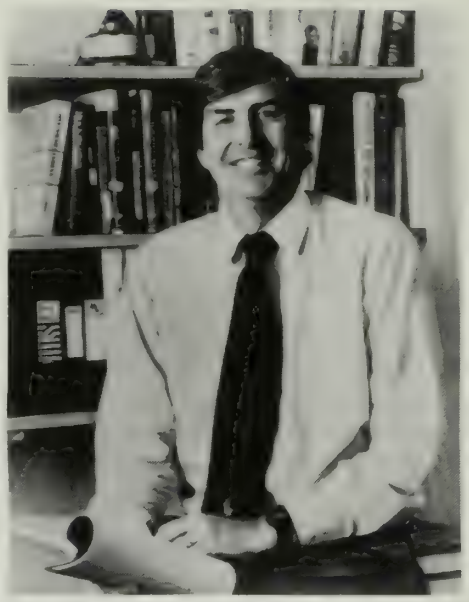
Cohen emphasizes Aries' philosophy of offering specialized attention to each of the films acquired. In Cohen's view, that kind of attention involves working with each film from acquisition through marketing and selling, an involvement that he and de Rothschild will personally undertake. Aries also hopes to develop new talent and relationships with emerging producers and directors.

The Aries partners attended the 1989 Venice and Toronto Film Festivals in search of new productions. Cohen expressed an interest in work he screened there from the U.S., Great Britain, Italy, France, Hungary, and Poland. Aries' plans include further exploration at such film festivals as Montreal, Mifed, and the Independent Feature Market in New York, in addition to contacts made through agents, filmmakers, and trade advertisements.

Cohen says that Aries is currently negotiating the rights to a number of pictures with the hope of acquiring five for release in 1990 and five to seven films in 1991, adding "We want to be the quality distributor of the 1990s."

For further information on Aries Film Releasing, contact Marion Billings or Kathy Mortola at (212) 581-4493, or Gayle Gari Cohen at (212) 246-0528.

LORNA JOHNSON



## DAVID LOXTON: 1943-1989

David Loxton, former director of the Television Laboratory at WNET and executive producer of hundreds of independent documentaries and video art works, died of cancer in New York City on September 20. He was 46.

Loxton joined New York City's public television station WNET in 1966. In 1972 he was selected to head WNET's newly established TV Lab, one of three such facilities situated within public television stations that were conceived by Nam June Paik and established with Rockefeller Foundation support. Loxton set up a full production and postproduction studio on the East Side of Manhattan, far from the adminstrative offices of WNET, and quickly established an artist-in-residence program. It was here that video artists like Paik, Merce Cunningham, Shirley Clarke, William Wegman, Ed Emshwiller, Peter Campus, and others came to make the works which many now consider cornerstones of video art.

Numerous first steps in broadcast history were taken at the TV Lab. In the early 1970s, independents began working with the first portable half-inch reel-to-reel video recorders coming out of Japan. Network television wouldn't touch this new small format, but Loxton recognized a revolution in the making. In 1973, TV Lab engineer John Godfrey sought out a new device called a time-base corrector, which allowed half-inch productions to satisfy the FCC's strict technical standards. In 1974, Top Value Television's *Lord of the Universe* became the first program recorded in small format to air nationally. It was followed six months later by Downtown Community TV's *Cuba: The People*, the first small format program broadcast in color. "The TV industry cannot fathom what they owe to David Loxton," commented Jon Alpert, one of *Cuba*'s coproducers. "When we

**David Loxton: 1943-1989**

Courtesy WNET

came back from Cuba with 48 hours of material, no one else would touch the stuff. The whole electronic news gathering revolution that transformed television started at the TV Lab."

In 1977 the TV Lab augmented the artist-in-residence program with the Independent Documentary Fund (IDF), supported by the Ford Foundation. Documentaries produced through IDF were aired nationally on the *Nonfiction Television* series. Among these award-winning programs were Jack Willis and Saul Landau's *Paul Jacobs and the Nuclear Gang*, DCTV's *Third Avenue: Only the Strong Survive*, Robert Epstein and Richard Schmiechen's *The Times of Harvey Milk*, William Miles' *I Remember Harlem*, and Robert Richter's *Pesticides and Pills: For Export Only*. Many other independent productions were aired on the TV Lab's regular showcase series *Video and Television Review* (*VTR*), later renamed *Video and Film Review*.

Loxton engaged in serious warfare to get and keep such programs on the air. TV Lab codirector Carol Brandenburg remembers, "David taught me how to function as a guerrilla inside the public television bureaucracy on behalf of the Lab's artists and producers, so we could accomplish the things we thought were important, no matter how difficult or controversial." The TV Lab came under fire from several directions in the early 1980s—from independent producers who objected to what they perceived as the Lab's exclusivity, public television officials who felt too much power and controversy was generated there, and funding agencies whose priorities had changed and now expected the Lab to carry on without their support. In 1984, the TV Lab disbanded. Loxton remained at WNET as director of drama for *Great Performances* and senior executive producer of specials. At the time of his death, he was going into production on a series on childhood around the world.

Working with David was fun. He was incisive, and could be critical. He had great instincts and a terrific sense of humor, which got him through difficult times. He gave many independents a home within public television, nurturing and believing in them, and getting their work on the air. He gave a large number of video artists and documentarians their start, and we owe him a great debt.

KIT FITZGERALD

*Kit Fitzgerald, a director and video artist, was an artist-in-residence at the TV Lab from 1977 to 1984.*

## SEQUELS

The controversy over exhibitions of photographs by Robert Mapplethorpe and Andres Serrano has led to the first **congressional restrictions on fed-**


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**eral arts funding based on content** [see "Punitive Damages: Congress Threatens Cuts in NEA Funding," October 1989 and "Run, Jesse, Run," November 1989]. Legislation prohibiting National Endowment for the Arts funding for "obscene" art was approved by Congress and sent to President Bush, who signed the appropriations bill on October 23. Congress settled on a scaled-down version of Senator Jesse Helms' proposed amendment, which would have denied funds to "obscene or indecent materials...material which denigrates the objects or beliefs of a particular religion or nonreligion [and art that] denigrates, debases, or reviles a person, group or class of citizens on the basis of race, creed, sex, handicap, age or national origin." The compromise includes only restrictions against works considered obscene. The constitutional definition of obscenity was set in 1973 by the Supreme Court in *Miller v. California*. It says a work must appeal to prurient interests, contain patently offensive portrayals of sexual acts, and lack serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value. This restriction will be in effect for one year, while a review of the NEA's grant-making procedures is undertaken. The bill allocates $250,000 to pay for this review. It also cuts $45,000 from the NEA's budget and places the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art and Institute for Contemporary Art, the two institutions responsible for the Serrano and Mapplethorpe exhibits, on probation for a year, during which time the NEA must notify relevant congressional committees if it seeks to award a grant to either organization.

In a related matter, the staff at the **Corcoran Gallery of Art**, which cancelled a planned exhibition of Mapplethorpe's photographs, has formally requested the resignation of director Christina Orr-Cahall, but she refused to comply. The Corcoran's board of directors delayed a decision on the matter, instead forming a commission to study low staff morale.

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**Gail Christian**, director of news and public affairs programming at PBS, resigned in late August. Christian, a 10-year veteran of PBS, acquired the controversial *Days of Rage* and was responsible for the investigation into its financing, which had been challenged by the conservative magazine the *New Republic* ["Promises, Promises: Programs on the Palestinian Intifada Accused of Bias," July 1989].

Other staff changes at PBS are underway. After a short term as director of CPB's Television Program Fund, **Jennifer Lawson** was promoted to the new and powerful position of executive vice president for national programming and promotion services, informally known as the **program czar** ["A Czar for All Seasons," July 1989]. Filling Lawson's earlier position as associate director of drama and arts programming is Perrin Ireland, who was a program officer at the NEA from 1974 to 1988.

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The New York State Council on the Arts announced a new program analyst in the Media Program, **Linda Gibson**. Gibson has extensive experience in independent media production, distribution, and exhibition. Independent producer and curator **Yvette Nieves-Cruz** is the new manager of the Guadalupe Theater and will also direct the San Antonio Cine-Festival. **Julie Levinson**, former curator of film at Boston's Institute for Contemporary Art, has joined the New England Foundation for the Arts as producer/curator of the cable television series *Mixed Signals*. Across the Atlantic, Oberhausen film festival director **Karola Gramann** resigned after a long dispute with local officials ["A Venerable Event Revamped: The Oberhausen International Short Film Festival," October 1989]. Her replacement is **Jochen Coldewey**, who comes from the Osnabrück Media Arts Festival.

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The European Community's directive imposing **program quotas on European broadcasters** was adopted on October 3 ["European Broadcasting: New Rules, Old Game," March 1989]. At stake is Hollywood's $2.5-billion in foreign sales. According to some reports, the aggressive lobbying by U.S. film industry representatives backfired. The directive, which will go into effect in 18 months, is politically but not legally binding. This leaves open the question of its practical application and the kinds of measures the EC can take against stations ignoring quotas.

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The revisions in **South Africa's film subsidy** conditions have proven to be a disappointment to local filmmakers ["The Cinema of Apartheid: Race and Class in South African Film," March 1989]. To qualify for a subsidy, filmmakers must now submit scripts to the censorship board. While previously progressive films faced censorship and banning after completion, many fear that the new requirement will block the creation of such films.

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A Senate and House conference committee approved a compromise **appropriation for CPB** in FY 1992. The $251.03-million recommended represents a $8.97-million increase over the 1991 CPB budget ["Sequels," December 1988].

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The Independent Feature Project/West, the membership organization based in Los Angeles, recently revised the guidelines for its annual **Spirit Awards**. In a press release issued by the group, independent producer and chair of the awards committee Jeanne Lucas explained, "We wanted to re-design the nominating and voting process to identify quality works that may not have yet received visibility." Although in previous years awards could only go to feature films 70 minutes or longer, produced outside the major studio system, and which had played at least one week in a commercial theater in L.A., the new guidelines allow independent features that have played *one day* in a commercial cinema anywhere in the U.S. to be nominated. Additionally, a new award was established for work that may not qualify as an independent film but "exemplifies bold, creative, independent vision."

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Faced with the possibility of a lawsuit, the Kansas City government decided not to pursue its legal battle with the **Ku Klux Klan**, represented by the ACLU, over the latter's rights to time on the city's public access channel ["Showdown in Kansas City: KKK vs. American Cablevision," Aug./Sept. 1988, "Sequels," Oct. 1988, Jan./Feb. 1989, and Oct. 1989]. But those who favored giving the cable company editorial control over the channel are now protesting the solution proposed to soothe those opposed to cablecasts of the Klan's program *Race and Reason*. American Cablevision of Kansas City is offering subscribers a trap that can be used to lock out undesired channels at a cost of $2 to $5. Community groups protesting the city's reluctance to engage in the lawsuit have threatened to boycott the cable company unless the devices are made available for free.

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Last July, the members of the **National Film Preservation Board** met ["To Color or Not to Color: Debates between Entrepreneurs, Auteurs, and Audiences on the Sanctity of Hollywood Classics," July 1989]. The group, created to designate 25 films per year for the next three years to be classified as national treasures, was expected to announce the 1989 list, but did not. The announcement finally came in late September, and the list was composed of predictable titles like *Citizen Kane*, *High Noon*, and *Nanook of the North*. The film registry was established in response to concerns over the alteration of classic black and white films but has no legal power to halt the growing colorization industry. The only protection the chosen films will enjoy is a label that alerts the viewer if the film has been colorized or otherwise altered.


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# PLANNING AHEAD: INNOVATIONS IN POSTPRODUCTION SOUND DESIGN

Katherine Shirek



**Editor Doug Murray in the digital design room for sound effects at the Saul Zaentz Film Center in Berkeley.**

Courtesy Saul Zaentz Film Center

The concept of postproduction sound as design, rather than an editorial compilation of dialogue, effects, and music, is relatively new, appearing in the last decade or so with the advent of Dolby noise reduction, automated dialogue replacement (ADR or looping), and sampling techniques. Today's soundtrack may be entirely manufactured from various elements, only one element of which is the dialogue and ambience recorded while the film is being shot. Even that is replaceable.

Computers, of course, have spawned many of the newest technical innovations in sound editing. Sound effects, traditionally recorded individually onto magnetic tape and ganged together to produce a mix, have been replaced by digital sampling effects captured on a CD or floppy disk. Computerized editing can match digitized code from the effects or dialogue source with a similarly encoded videotape. With a press of a button a line or effect may be laid over the appropriate picture and just as easily enhanced, modified, or erased. New recording formats such as RDAT or RDASH now make it possible to go the digital route from the start, making the editing of unclean dialogue easy.

Dolby SR is the analog camp's answer to the new digital technology. Although quite expensive, it can produce a soundtrack several db quieter than those that use the best digital systems. Also, Dolby SR enables continued utilization of existing analog techniques while maintaining the positive attributes of analog sound—a richer sound, the ability to use older equipment, and manual cutting techniques, which some people still prefer.

The increasing number of technical choices has stimulated a growing interest in audio aesthetics. "In *The Thin Blue Line* we used a hyperrealistic approach," says Jack Leahy of Russian Hill Recording in San Francisco. "As the scenes were reenactments of a crime, we heightened their intensity by emphasizing some effects, while not paying attention to others at all. The artistic choice came from deciding what to acknowledge based on the creative logic of the film. The mechanical style of the score by Philip Glass also helped; it was repetitious, eliciting a sort of descent into hell. It was an unusually good effect, that marriage of the music and the message and emotion of the film."

"*True Stories*, on the other hand," continues Leahy, "was a different concept altogether. Since David Byrne is very music oriented, we mechanized a lot of effects with electronic sounds not occurring in nature. In the scene in the microprocessor company, the assembly line sounds are all electronic musical elements, organized in counterpoint rhythms with syncopations and repetitions of certain sounds. The soundtrack was more impressionistic than literal."

Technical innovations are largely responsible for the creative possibilities now afforded a low-budget filmmaker. "With new technology like sampling techniques you can get 90 percent of the bang for 10 percent of the buck," says Doug Murray of Saul Zaentz Film Center in Berkeley. "Instead of using two-by-fours, you're using cloth. Digital effects are more flexible, malleable. You're inverting and mixing sound instead of just plugging it in."

"Independent filmmakers will benefit more from the advancements in postproduction sound technology than anyone else," corroborates Leahy. The technology that is gaining currency is now able to produce high quality soundtracks that, prior to 10 to 15 years ago, would have been prohibitively expensive for a lower budget film. "That's not to say you will some day be able to get a soundtrack for $1.98," Leahy chuckles. "The quality, speed, and ease of making the soundtrack will be greatly enhanced, but you have to realize that the equipment for this stuff is and will remain quite expensive. Plus, the faster the process, the higher the rates that will be charged. It's a fact of life."

In spite of these cost factors, the relationship of price to quality has improved, and there will soon be little excuse for a low-budget film to have a soundtrack which is significantly inferior in quality to a film with a higher budget. *Twin Peaks*, a TV pilot by David Lynch that will be aired this fall, is a case in point. "It was perhaps one of the most challenging projects I've been on recently," relates Murray. "The budget was limited and we only had two weeks for postproduction, from the end of the shoot to the mix. And, David Lynch's expectations were higher than most." They were able to overcome these obstacles by using digital samples for their effects, working around the clock and having "a great sound crew." Similar results could not have been achieved 15 years ago.

Technology unfortunately also distorts the expectations of what can be produced for how much money. "People tend to worry about postproduction sound once the film is in the can," remarks Leahy. "During production they have more immediate concerns, like survival." The sound editor has always been able to take poorly recorded production tapes and enhance or even reconstruct them to boost their quality. This is increasingly easy to do, but it's obviously far from cost-effective. "The single most important piece of advice I can give someone shooting on a low budget," says Leahy, "is to invest in a good sound recordist. The extra money you spend on an established, highly regarded professional will be saved many times over on the back end."

"It would be nice to get post and production sound together," agrees Murray. "If [the sound



**Russian Hill Recording mixer Samuel Lehmer, director Errol Morris, "Mr. Mel," and chief engineer Jack Leahy during the mix of *The Thin Blue Line*.**

Courtesy Russian Hill Recording

recordist] understands our need for whatever they can get in the way of wild effects—over and above a good dialogue track, of course—it gives us all a better shot at making the film different and interesting." Unfortunately, the postproduction sound designer rarely gets to interact with the production sound recordist, as the post house is usually not chosen until after the shoot. "The filmmakers should give the soundtrack the attention it deserves *before* the shoot is over," advises Murray. "It doesn't cost more to talk over the vision and creative development of the project with a postproduction designer—and once a team is on the same creative wavelength, things just work a lot better. There's not a lot of time when you're in the middle of a shoot to be reflective," he continues. "Low-budget films tend to waste a lot of money trying to save it. A lack of communication and the use of inexperienced recordists tends to waste much more time, and money, in the long run than it saves. You need a high level, creative focus—and a lot of planning—to get things to work."

Glenn Berkovitz, a Los Angeles-based production sound recordist with many years' experience in postproduction, envisions a need for a total sound coordinator, "someone who could interface between the director, the editor, myself, and the postproduction people." Sometimes this function can be filled by a savvy line producer, unfortunately, often it's not. "There's an attitude that can be brought to the shoot, to capture not only the dialogue but also the artistic feeling which can and should be conveyed—through ambience, wild sounds, whatever. There are some things that are only available at the time of the shoot. It helps if there is someone around to communicate the bigger picture."

Working on *Miss Firecracker*, for example, Berkovitz used the second track of his stereo setup to mic a cicada singing in a tree. This enabled the postproduction team to maintain a clean dialogue track while keeping the effect. He tries to make it a practice to communicate with the postproduction team to help with the interpretation of the tape logs, use of his stereo tracks, and matching ambience. Communication between the two camps invariably enhances the soundtrack and reduces the time factor.

Despite the ease of recording, editing, or manufacturing the soundtrack, Leahy cautions that "none of what we've been talking about is going to matter unless exhibitors get their act together. You have a 65 to 70 db noise floor in a theater—if you can't hear the soundtrack, what's the point? Business practices and economics have, until recently, just not inspired exhibitors to care. However, and thankfully, the audiences have been getting choosier over the last few years, opting to see a movie in theater A over theater B because of the sound quality. If that trend continues, there will be improvements. Theaters will start paying attention to their EQ, their doors, their speakers, and much better insulation in the multiplexes."

Also, Leahy notes the enormous increase of home viewing. "People are becoming movie experts overnight. There's a ratio of probably 10 movies seen at home to every one in the theater, and the payoff really helps the independents." Leahy recounts how Werner Herzog recently had to get one of his soundtracks remixed in order to make a deal for home video distribution. "You now have to pay more attention to the soundtrack because, if for no other reason, at home you can hear the soundtrack."

What does the future hold? Doug Murray is excited about the ever increasing efficiency of the editorial process. "As sound technology gets cheaper, the quality is going to necessarily get better. The only limiting factor is on the delivery end." For Jack Leahy, the future "will be *fun*. There'll be an endless supply of stuff that will make the creation of a soundtrack more interesting, more accessible, and more expedient." However, he goes on to caution, the new technology is great, "but it is not a substitute for an idea. What still counts, as always, is the story and the way it's acted. In the final analysis, as long as it sounds good it doesn't really matter how it's done."

*Katherine Shirek, a screenwriter, author of audio dramas, computer consultant, and technical director for an opera company, lives and works in Los Angeles.*


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# EMPLOYEE OR INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR? RULING CLARIFIES COPYRIGHT LAW

Robert L. Seigel

As a film/videomaker, consider the following scenarios:

¶ A ballet company hires a filmmaker to produce and direct a documentary about the company. There is no discussion concerning the ownership of the film. Once the film is completed, there is a dispute between the parties concerning the content of the film, subsequently leading to another dispute regarding the ownership of the film. Query: Who owns the film?

¶ A videomaker is employed to produce, write, and direct two exercise videos for the video division of a publishing company. The videomaker is responsible for hiring all creative and technical personnel, has rented his/her equipment using the publishing company's funds, and is shooting in one of the company studios. There is no discussion concerning copyright between the publishing company and the videomaker, and a dispute arises concerning this issue between the parties. Query: Who owns the videotapes?

As a general rule under the current copyright law, the party who actually creates a copyrightable work is considered its "author" and the owner of all the rights to that work. However, there is a major exception to this rule when the film or tape in question is a "work-for-hire" or a "work-made-for-hire." Under the current copyright law, all authorship rights and copyrights of a "work-for-hire" are vested in the employer or in the commissioning party.

There are two sections pertaining to "work-for-hire" in the current copyright law. According to its provision, such a work can be a product created by an "employee in the scope of his or her employment" *or* a "specially ordered or commissioned work" that falls within one of nine enumerated categories *if* the parties expressly agree *in writing*, signed by both parties, that the creation is a "work-for-hire." One of these enumerated categories is a work that is "[as part of a] motion picture and other audio-visual creation."

The distinctions between these two sections are more than academic for the creator (i.e., the film/videomaker). If he or she is an "employee" under the first section of the "work-for-hire" section, the employer automatically owns all rights to the creation, including reproduction rights as well as the fundamental right to claim authorship of the creation. (There is a situation when a "work-for-hire" employee can obtain credit for his work; however, he or she would receive credit due to a signatory agreement between a creator, such as a screenwriter, and a production company under a Writers Guild pact, not the current copyright law.)

However, under the second section of the "work-for-hire" provision, only certain types of creations (including commissioned or specially ordered contributions to motion pictures and other audio-visual creations) are eligible to be "works-for-hire," and the creator must express consent to such a status to his or her work in writing, signed by both parties, expressly stating that the creation is a "work-for-hire."

In short, the first section of the "work-for-hire" provision applies to "employees" and the second section applies to "independent contractors." Until recently, the problem which has plagued creative people and the courts has been in determining whether a creator, such as a film/videomaker, was an "employee" or an "independent contractor," since neither term is defined under the current copyright law.

Until the United States Supreme Court decided the case of *Community for Creative Non-Violence v. Reid*, the problem of determining who was an "employee" in terms of the current copyright law was exacerbated by a split of authority and approaches by different circuit courts throughout the United States. In the case of *Aldon Accessories Ltd. v. Spiegel, Inc.* the Second Circuit Court (frequently known as the "Copyright Circuit") held that a freelance artist whose work was supervised and directed by the party commissioning the work should be considered an "employee" for "work-for-hire" purposes. This approach to the "work-for-hire" issue included the "right to control" and the "actual control" tests, both of which had to be fulfilled in order to have the work accorded "work-for-hire" status. This approach was also followed by the Fourth and Seventh Circuit Courts. In contrast, the Fifth and D.C. Circuit Courts adopted the view that the term "employee" carries its own common law agency meaning. (Such meaning will be discussed in greater detail below.) Also, in *Dumas v. Gommerman*, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, which includes the hub of the motion picture and television industries, California, held that the term "employee" only referred to "formal, salaried" employees under the "work-for-hire" provision.

These conflicting approaches to the "work-for-hire" issue had to be faced head-on by the United States Supreme Court in *Reid*. The facts in *Reid* appear relatively straightforward: the Community for Creative Non-Violence (CCNV), a Washington, D.C., organization dedicated to eliminating homelessness, and one of its trustees, Mitchell Snyder, entered into an oral agreement with a sculptor named James Earl Reid, to produce a sculpture dramatizing the plight of the homeless. While Reid worked on his own on the sculpture in his own studio, CCNV members visited him frequently to monitor his progress. Reid accepted most of CCNV's suggestions regarding the sculpture. CCNV, on its own, created a grill-shaped base for the sculpture. After Reid delivered the completed work (and the sculpture and the base were joined together), CCNV paid Reid the final installment of the mutually agreed upon price. The parties had never discussed the issue of copyright and both parties subsequently filed competing copyright registration certificates.

The dispute arose when both Reid and CCNV began to arrange tours of the sculpture and they discovered their conflicting copyright claims. CCNV argued that the sculpture produced by Reid was a "work-for-hire" because he had been subject to the CCNV's control, and therefore had been the organization's "employee."

To counter that argument, Reid contended that he retained the copyright on his sculpture in the absence of any written agreement to the contrary. He also argued that Congress never intended to make the "supervision and control" of a creator's work the touchstone or basis by which a creator would be considered an "employee" for copyright purposes.

The Supreme Court rejected the *Aldon* "actual control" test and the over-restrictive Ninth Circuit *Dumas* "formal, salaried" employee test, and it decided instead that the general common law of agency should be applied to determine the status of a creator under the current copyright law. In its decision that Reid was not an "employee" but an "independent contractor," the Supreme Court considered the hiring party's rights to control the manner by which a creation is produced as *only* one factor in determining the status of a creator. Other factors enumerated by the Supreme Court include: 1. the skill required by the creator; 2. the

source of the instrumentalities and tools; 3. the location of the work; 4. the duration of the relationship between the parties; 5. whether the hiring party has the right to assign additional projects to the hired party; 6. the extent of the hired party's discretion over when and how long to work; 7. the method of payment (i.e., weekly, monthly, per project); 8. the hired party's role in hiring and paying assistants; 9. whether the work is part of the regular business of the hiring party; 10. the provision of employee benefits; and 11. the tax treatment of the hired party (i.e., any withholding taxes taken from the hired party's wages).

In its decision in the *Reid* case, the Supreme Court observed that the sculptor provided his own tools and studio, worked for a relatively short period of time, had discretion regarding how and when to work and whom to hire. The Court also noted that CCNV never paid payroll and social security taxes, unemployment insurance, or worker's compensation to Reid.

The Court concurred with Reid that the use of the term "employee" in the definition of "work-for-hire" was "meant to refer to a hired party in a conventional employment relationship."

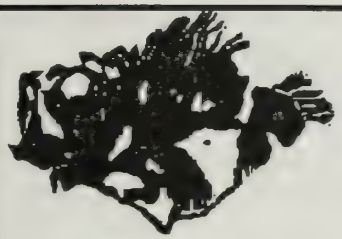
Although the *Reid* case involved a sculptor, the general agency factors stated by the Court to determine whether a creator is an "independent contractor" or an "employee" can apply to film/videomakers.

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One of the most important results of the Reid decision is that commissioning parties who fail to obtain copyrights in writing from creators will no longer be able to use the "employee" fiction to divest freelancers of their rights and to circumvent the current copyright law. In fact, most advertising agencies, production companies, and studios require all workers, both salaried and freelance, to sign agreements acknowledging that their creations are "works-for-hire" and that any and all copyrights are transferred to the hiring party. Therefore, in the hypothetical cases presented earlier in the article, the ballet company, the publishing company, and the film/videomakers involved could have avoided a dispute concerning the ownership of the film/video if all the parties had discussed the issue and had entered into a signed, written agreement with each respective creator, acknowledging that the film/video was a "work-for-hire."

It should also be noted that commissioning or hiring parties who want the rights of a creator without having to draft a written agreement will be required to provide employment benefits such as those stated above. By the same token, creators now have a checklist to determine whether they are "employees" or "independent contractors."

One illustration of how the issue of ownership of films and videotapes can be resolved is found in the 1987 case of *Easter Seal Society for Crippled Children and Adults of Louisiana, Inc. v. Playboy Enterprises*. Similar to the later *Reid* case, the

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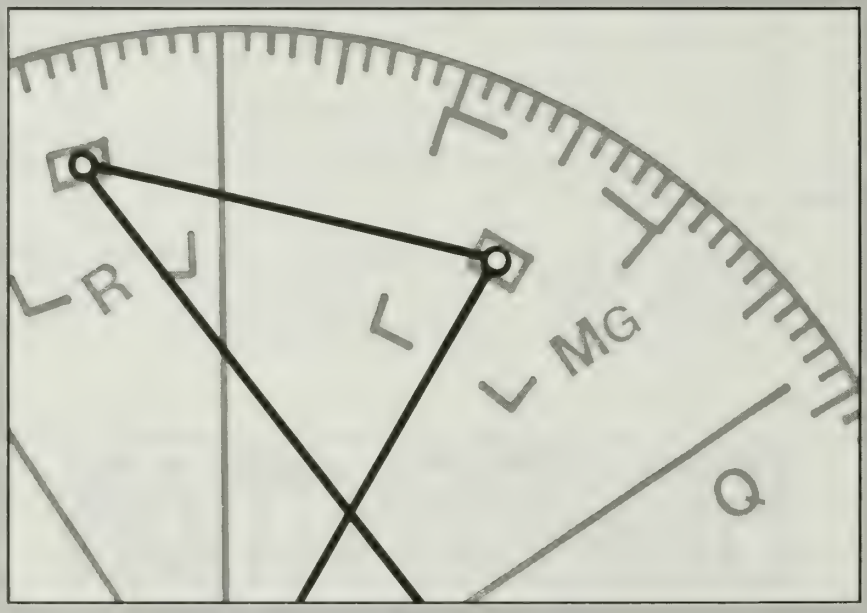
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facts in the *Easter Seal* case are straightforward: the Easter Seal Society hired a local television station to videotape the charitable organization's parade and jam session. The television station sold a portion of the field footage of the parade to a third party and that portion of tape was included in an "adult" film called *Candy the Stripper* which was distributed on a cable program produced by Playboy. The Easter Seal Society claimed that it owned the copyright to the tapes of the jam session and the parade and that the television station and Playboy infringed on the organization's rights. There was no discussion or agreement concerning copyright among the parties.

The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals held that the television station's videotape was not a "work-for-hire" since the station was not an "employee" under the first section of the "work-for-hire" provision of the current copyright law (as determined by the court in its adoption of the general agency principles discussed above). Moreover, the videotape was not a "work-for-hire" under the "commissioned works" section of the copyright law since the television station and the Easter Seal Society did not specify in a signed writing that the videotape was a "work-for-hire."

One interesting point raised by the court (but never argued by the Easter Seal Society) concerns the possibility of a co-ownership of the videotape by both parties. The court observed that the jam session that was taped by the television station was a creation of the Easter Seal Society; thus, the videotape portions depicting the musical performances were interdependent joint works of authorship by both parties.

Applying the principle of joint ownership and authorship to the hypothetical ballet film, if the traditional, salaried workers of the ballet company had written the script for the film about the ballet company, the company could argue that the contributions of both the filmmaker and the ballet company were part of an intended joint venture and were "inseparable or interdependent parts of a unitary whole" (i.e., the film), then the ballet company and the filmmaker could be considered co-owners of the film.

In the *Reid* case, the Supreme Court addressed but did not resolve the issue of whether Reid is the sole owner of the sculpture or that CCNV is a joint author and owner of the sculpture with Reid since CCNV did contribute the base of the sculpture. The High Court remanded the case to the lower federal court to determine whether Reid and CCNV prepared the work "with the intention that their contributions be merged into inseparable or interdependent parts of a unitary whole." If the lower federal court decides that CCNV and Reid are co-authors of the sculpture, then they will be co-owners of the work, and each party will be able to market the work independently without the other party's permission and would only be accountable to the other party for the latter's share of the profits.

In the ballet company example, both the com-

pany and the hired filmmaker, as co-owners, could market the film independently (and, perhaps, at cross-purposes from each other) without any coordination or need for consent from the other party, as long as each one accounts to the other party any profits that the former earned. This co-ownership and authorship issue is still an open point that is and will continue to be grist for the debate mill whenever the topic of "work-for-hire" is discussed.

Placing the co-ownership issue aside, a film/videomaker must consider a less obvious point; whenever he or she hires a crew and a creative staff, the film/videomaker should draft and enter into written agreements with such personnel as art directors, music directors, and composers with an inserted "work-for-hire" provision in employment contracts between the parties. Otherwise, film/videomakers will discover that the same arguments that they use to claim ownership of their creations could be used against them by their crew and staff.

Although the Supreme Court has clarified some aspects of the "work-for-hire" provision, disputes concerning ownership of creations will probably continue since every situation will vary. By way of illustration, the fictional exercise videotapes described at the beginning of this article demonstrate how dependent upon facts and imprecise the distinctions between an "employee" and an "independent contractor" can appear to both the legal community and the independent film and video industry. In this hypothetical case, one can argue that the videomaker is an "independent contractor" since he or she has control over the projects themselves (while the publishing company can only supervise in a general manner), can hire and discharge personnel on the projects, does not receive employment benefits, and was hired for only two projects. However, one can counter this argument by stating that the publishing company is obtaining the equipment and the studio facilities for the videomaker and that the company is in the business of producing videotapes through its division. As one can observe, the status of a film/videomaker in such a situation is far from clear.

In addition to the co-ownership issue, other open questions include whether "work-for-hire" agreements must be signed prior to the start of a project or at anytime during or after the project is completed, whether such agreements must be negotiated on a project-by-project basis, and whether the *Reid* decision should be applied retroactively to those commissioned works created after the enactment of the current copyright law and prior to the *Reid* decision.

Some of these points will be addressed by the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Patents, Copyrights and Trademarks, and Senator Thad Cochran (R-Mississippi) has introduced a bill which will define "joint work" and prevent commissioning parties from entering into broad "work-for-hire" written agreements after a creative project has been completed.

Finally, it should be noted that for independent film/videomakers, especially in the nonmainstream documentary, advertising, and industrial film areas, the importance of the *Reid* decision cannot be overemphasized. It serves as a victory and a cautious note to all who create and work with creative people that early discussions, negotiations, and written agreements can protect everyone's rights. Attention to these issues might not only salvage the relationship between the film/videomaker and a producer (as well as a crew member or commissioning party) but also save the project itself.

*Robert L. Seigel is an attorney who is currently in private practice in New York City in the areas of intellectual property and entertainment law. His clients include screenwriters, filmmakers, and artists.*

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# Global Pillage

**Global Television**
edited by Cynthia Schneider and Brian Wallis; Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1989; 320 pp.; $12.50 (paper)

**Bill Horrigan**



THIS DAY IN HISTORY:

East Germany threw itself a fortieth birthday party today, and no one came. Or, rather, the party was crashed by its citizens, and they rioted. According to the *CBS Evening News*, reported by Dan Rather, 50,000 angry residents of Leipzig (proles in flames, denounced by their parent government as "hooligans inspired by the Western media") took to the streets, toppled a realistic statue of Lenin, and, if the translation of their banners is to be trusted, demanded a summary end to the style of communism to which they had evidently failed to become accustomed. This was shown to be a reprise (tragic? predictable? historically inscribed?) of the events of 1953, which few of today's protestors, born to the regime, had reason or capacity to recall.

Elsewhere in the beleaguered Eastern bloc, Hungarians are demanding to live not under "communism" but "socialism," this, too, being a nuance expressed earlier during the hopeful days of 1956.

The *CBS Evening News* evokes these earlier cataclysms for us via newsreel footage: grainy black and white actuality documentation, clearly without sound in the original form but sweetened by CBS engineers through the pretty artless application of sound effects to ground it in the real—gunshots, the drone of tanks, screams, chanting in foreign tongues.

We now leap to Latvia, today dying to become one with its Baltic companions.

That's the Old World, aging.

Today, in this world, here's a little of what's new. High school seniors are revealed to be ignorant, 53 percent of them, of the decade during which the American Civil War took place; and 72 percent of them misidentify a central passage of the Communist Manifesto as appearing in the U.S. Constitution. Meanwhile, in San Francisco, the Giants beat the Cubs in the pennant race, and, as American sports prowess is the setting of international measure, they are confirmed as one of the two best teams in the world.

"That's the world tonight," clarified Dan Rather, signing off.

That, in any case, is one explanation of the globe, this day in history, here where women and men breathe free.

This is also one way of describing anecdotally what might be called global television: a way of describing it symptomatically, a way of pointing to the immediacy, to the *presence*, television can now effect in being able to bring some images and some sounds of the distant world right into the home, right now, here, just for you.

This is a symptom, a technologically-enabled condition or capability available to the modern television state, thanks to satellites, portable cameras, and so on.

Distinct enough from this is an idea of global television as an aspiration, most familiar as such, benignly, in the terms of McLuhanism, which glimpsed an end (discursive, but also actual) to the nineteenth-century nationalism of military borders and currency, doomed either just to fade away or to be convulsively thrown up once the global citizenry came to see, thanks to visual media, that they in essence inhabited one body.

Symptom or aspiration: one of *Global Television*'s most useful strategies is its flexible vacillation between these two certainties. Edited by Cynthia Schneider and Brian Wallis and serving as issue numbers nine and ten of the journal *Wedge*, *Global Television* consists of 24 essays, about two-thirds of them original to this volume. The editors' introduction sets out some of the book's basic conditions:

> Global television refers not only to the international dissemination of television images, but also to the radical restructuring of television as a geopolitical concept.... In this anthology, we have not attempted to "scan the globe": notably absent from this volume are analyses of the implications of programming structures in the Eastern bloc, Asia, and parts of the Third World. Recognizing these significant exclusions among others, this volume is nevertheless a step towards opening a self-critical, cross-continental dialogue about global television. It is a collection that focuses on hegemonic culture, the television that is dominating global traffic, and specific responses and critiques engendered by it.

The book's three organizing sections attempt in concert to address the main constituents for a theory of global television. "Nationalism and Imperialism" casts that distinction largely in terms of the play of acceptance/rejection of exported U.S. television by its client nations. "Expanding Technologies" surveys the varied forms whereby viewers "participate" in television, ranging from a voluntaristic "non-acceptance" to such more apparently active interventions as VCR time-shifting and public access. In the final section, "Representation and Resistance," a range of case studies points up the internal rifts and elisions involved in television's attempts to recognize (from production to broadcast) racial and sexual differences.

For the most part, the book's first two parts give some of the mechanics of global transmission. Here, for instance, are found analytical overviews of national televisions (Israel, France) and statistical studies revealing the massive imbalance between indigenous and imported productions, with the

In "Soap Operas and Loss," a photo/text piece included in *Global Television*, Leslie Sharpe and Micki McGee analyze pop culture representations of madness, amnesia, and abandonment.

In her essay on Michael Jackson, Michele Wallace depicts the star's recent performances as examples of Black Modernism, an "enlightened trend" in African American culture that is "in consistent pursuit of meaning, history, continuity, and the power of subjectivity."



U.S. unmasked as both the least significant importer of foreign productions—an estimated two percent of total programming time, principally from Mexico and Britain—and by far the biggest single exporter to Western Europe, Africa, and Latin America. There are also analyses of independent interventions aimed at providing readings of social developments and public policy different from how those are officially interpreted by national televisions—the *Counterterror* project produced in El Salvador, Lebanon, Northern Ireland, and the U.S., for example.

With one exception, unexpressed in these varied commentaries is a belief that the idea of global television could conceivably be construed ás a positive force, an ideal, something one might want to nurture—globalism as an imminently (or, anyway, irresistibly) unifying world phenomenon, like, e.g., Esperanto or metricism. A rhetoric or an argument suitably opposed to such an idea, expressed with nuance and conviction, is also scarcely heard.

The exception comes in Coco Fusco's interview with a man named Josh Elbaum, who at the time of the interview was a sales representative with an independent television distributor, *Telepictures*. Committed to no principle other than those of business, Elbaum discusses on a country-by-country basis some of his adventures in trading television to foreign markets. He has no confusion about the nature of his product: "Television is a tool [in the USSR]. Television in this country is not so much a tool as it is a vehicle for entertainment or killing time, or whatever. Even though you do have your *60 Minutes* and your *Firing Line*...."

Speaking in perfect harmony with how U.S. television network executives choose to regard what they put on the airwaves (recalling the moment a few years ago when ABC's Brandon Stoddard took violent exception to anyone who said the hysterically right-wing miniseries *Amerika* was "political"), Elbaum acquits himself as a model salesperson genially acknowledging that "we'll sell anywhere and everywhere. South Africa is the most obvious example. If we said no to South Africa, where would it end?" It's a useful question with an obvious, radically repressed, answer.

Other questions—all the recondite questions—about television, in order to be asked and answered rigorously, turn eventually on ideas of subjectivity and on the form of address television simulates in its construction of you, the home viewer. There are people, still, who maintain that they turn on television from habit only and then refrain from paying real attention to it as it chats away. True enough, but as a habit that disguises the more fundamental one, which might be expressed by asking: Why watch something rather than nothing at all? An answer to that, of course, would require close enough to a life's vocation to exhaust, as it would involve producing a commentary that kept virtual pace with life itself, with the domestic routine of each citizen, a running-right-alongside text speaking, in a thoroughly refracted form, concerns one would, if undistracted, have articulated in a different fashion altogether. Then the argument that television fails criminally to "mirror" the subjective depths of a citizenry is a misconceived jeremiad or, at any rate, is no less dubious an argument than the one claiming that the classic realist novel makes only dishonest, "manipulative," demands on the reader. It's a historically-conditioned idiom whose vitality emerges from the idiom's simple persistence, and the changes within that persistence produced by time.

Within the infinite field of television, of course, especially in the corporate incarnation by which most of us know it, the silences, the misrepresentations, the falsehoods, and the consumer-driven opportunisms are manifold and must be countered with dialogue, criticism, and any other action signalling the refusal of endorsement. A number of *Global Television*'s texts are exemplary in this regard—for instance, Timothy Landers' demonstration of television's homophobia in relation to its refusal to responsibly provide critical information about AIDS, and Michelle Wallace's rescue of Michael Jackson from the racist backlash that would infantilize (hence, neuter) him as some manner of freak.

Still, to comprehend global television is to comprehend global dreaming, the world either wide awake with both eyes shut or sleeping with open eyes. There's no difference, just as whatever difference there might be would be a slight one between television as a cyclops gaze with a global range and television as a thousand untrained eyes. Beyond that, it's some kind of axiom that *watching*, as an activity privileged within the domestic sphere, doesn't want to be unlearned or overlooked.

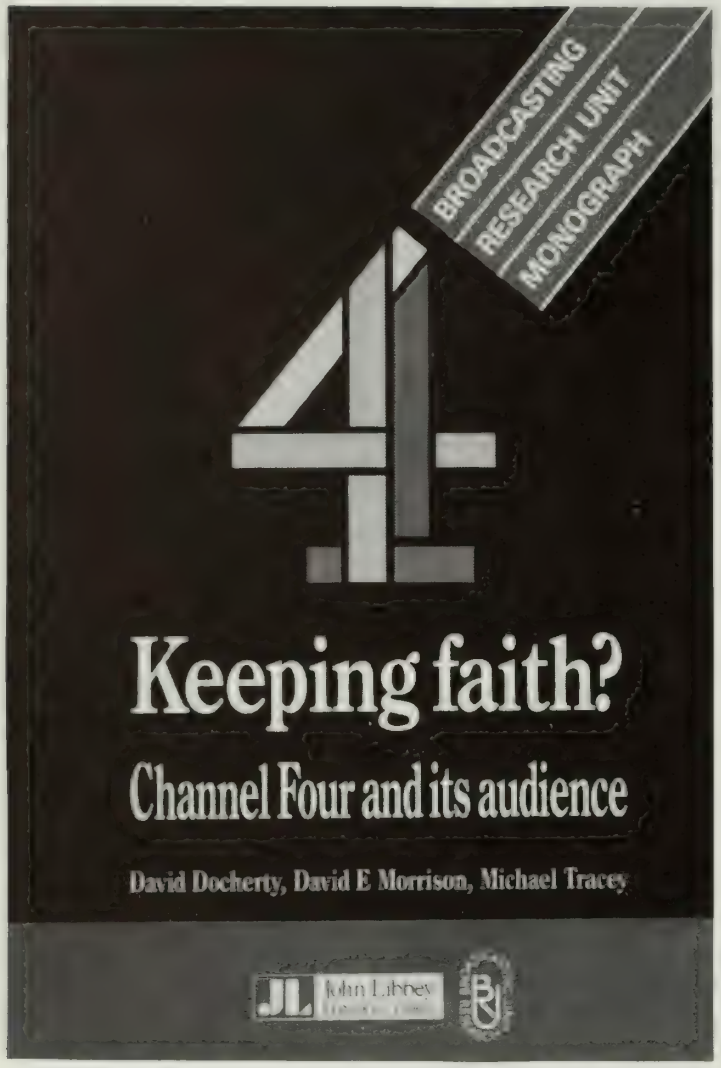
*Bill Horrigan is media curator at the Wexner Center for the Visual Arts in Columbus, Ohio, and co-curator of Video Against AIDS.*

# Anatomy of a Channel

**Keeping Faith? Channel Four and Its Audience**
by David Docherty, David E. Morrison, and Michael Tracey
(Broadcasting Research Unit Monograph); London and Paris: John Libbey, 1988; 184 pp.; £15.00 (paper)

**Laurence Jarvik**

WHEN BRITAIN'S CHANNEL FOUR was founded in 1982, it promised to bring "television with a difference"—the title of Stephen Lambert's book on the birth of the channel—to English audiences tired of the media duopoly held by the BBC and ITV companies. The enterprising spirit of the company was embodied in its first chief executive, Jeremy Isaacs. A former documentary producer who made *The World at War*, Isaacs advocated a broadcasting schedule devoted to the needs of "minority audiences" not met by the BBC or ITV channels. The term was interpreted very broadly by the channel in its early years. In addition to featuring ethnic, gay, feminist, avant-garde, and leftist political programming, Channel Four also aired American football, *The Munsters*, and other shows not previously seen in




the United Kingdom. Almost from the start, the channel was attacked by critics dissatisfied with the course it had taken. Since Michael Grade replaced Isaacs—who left to head the Royal Opera in 1988—there have been resignations and turmoil in the ranks of Channel Four staffers. Many in Britain were keen to dismantle the channel, or change its direction.

Partly in response to these criticisms—many voiced by political allies of Mrs. Thatcher eager to convert the channel into a market-driven profit center in a deregulated television industry—Channel Four commissioned a scientific survey by the Broadcasting Research Unit to evaluate its success in fulfilling its purpose under the Broadcasting Act, which directed it to "cater for interests not catered for by ITV, or be a distinctive service." The result of this study is the excellent *Keeping Faith? Channel Four and Its Audience*. It is a detailed view of how British audiences perceive their alternative TV company. In addition to being an important contribution to the debate over the future of television in Britain, it provides a valuable reference for those pondering how the British experience might contain significant lessons for the future of U.S. broadcasting. In many respects, it is a perfect companion volume to Isaacs' autobiographical *Storm over 4: A Personal Account* (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1989) and should be required reading for anyone interested in broadcasting policy.

*Keeping Faith?* consists of four parts. The first, entitled "Channel Four: Theory and Promise," is based largely on historical documents and interviews with the founders of the new TV company. This section provides a brief narrative account of the political and corporate background which led to the establishment of Channel Four—beginning with Tony Smith's April 1972 article in the *Guardian*, proposing a British National Television Foundation. Smith's idea of "publishing" TV programs was the germ of the channel's industrial organization, which now, in the words of authors Docherty, Morrison, and Tracey, has "become caught in a pincer movement of left and right."

Channel Four Television began broadcasting on November 2, 1982, the first new channel in Britain since BBC-2 first went on the air in 1964. Among the new programs developed were a late night slot, *The Eleventh Hour*, devoted to work made by independent producers and the various workshops subsidized by the channel; magazine shows such as *Black on Black* and *Eastern Eye*; music shows like *Reggae Sunsplash*; and all-women productions like *Broadside*. The channel also commissioned its own soap opera about social problems, *Brookside*, and feature films for *Film on Four*. This series, headed by David Rose, former director of the BBC's regional drama unit in Birmingham, resulted in the production of 20 films per year with budgets of about $500,000 each.

Initial criticisms of programming focused on the output being too left-wing, providing too little entertainment, as well as on poor programming for ethnic groups, and disappointing ratings. *Keeping Faith?* includes interviews with the producers and commissioning editors of these shows and others. They give revealing, contradictory, *Rashomon*-like accounts of their trials and tribulations. Overall, the Channel Four system is endorsed, although much of the evidence in the book is extremely critical of the company.

One of the conflicts inherent in the structure of Channel Four is that between the aesthetics of commissioning editors and financial requirements. As *Keeping Faith?* makes clear, Channel Four is now and has been from its inception a private company owned by a consortium of the ITV companies. It is not what we in the U.S. would consider a public television company. Channel Four sells advertising to commercial sponsors, keeps track of ratings, and generally operates on a businesslike basis to produce a return for its owners. It therefore has an incentive to keep production costs low and revenues high. This structural characteristic alone substantially differentiates it from U.S. public television and the BBC.

The second chapter, "Channel Four in Practice," closely examines the structure of the channel's operations and the personalities behind the programs broadcast. This section is based on interviews as well as contemporary press criticism and accounts for four powerful forces that have shaped the channel's output: 1. The editorial imperative like that in a publishing house, which grants the commissioning editors the personal power to create programming; 2. tensions between a journalistic "scoop" mentality and the political pressures exerted on sources of progressive programming in Thatcher's conservative Britain; 3. what the authors call the "hidden right," meaning the absence of the National Front and other far-right groups which are never represented on the BBC—How can the channel fulfill its mandate to air minority programming without including them?—and, 4. the pressures of business practices affecting program content. The authors of *Keeping Faith?* contend that these forces have proven extremely influential in determining the programs acquired by the channel. In their view, Channel Four found itself having to bend its founding principles rather than break down altogether.

Initially Channel Four was financed by a four percent levy on the revenue of the "third channel" commercial ITV companies under the supervision of the Independent Broadcasting Authority. The ITV companies recouped their investment on a regional basis from the sale of advertising but had no say in programming. That remained in the hands of the Channel Four Television Company, Ltd.—an entity which creates no shows of its own, rather commissioning work from independent production companies or buying ready-made programs.

There is a downside to this system, however, not adequately addressed in *Keeping Faith?* Namely, by commissioning rather than creating programs, Channel Four's cost-conscious programming often works against both smaller production companies and labor unions. In a recent issue of the *Listener*, Barry Flynn scolded the Labour Party for its part in hurting broadcast workers by setting up Channel Four:

> I remember an angry John Foster (then, as now, broadcasting organizer for the National Union of Journalists) warning one of our early Diverse chapel meetings that

Channel Four represents a Trojan horse aimed at the heart of the broadcasting unions. "This will casualise the industry," he said—and he was right. Scarcely a new staff job can now be found in either ITV or BBC. But it must be noted that many a radical young independent wishing to challenge the status quo became positively Thatcherite when it came to hiring staff...and for sound business reasons.

Not only have unions suffered. The independent production company Court House Films, working under contracts with Channel Four, found itself virtually mortgaged to its client because of tremendous financial pressures to cut costs and increase revenues, thus ceasing to be really financially "independent" at all.

Even cheaper than nonunion, independent productions are syndicated programs made in the U.S. Channel Four features a number of U.S. series, including *L.A. Law*, *Lost in Space*, and *I Love Lucy*. Why are reruns of mainstream U.S. shows are acquired for what was meant to be an alternative channel? Initially, Channel Four was watched by only four percent of the British viewing public. The main viewers were middle-class, young audiences, not the "minorities" promised by the channel's founders. Within five months after start-up, a new programming strategy was instituted, concentrating on entertainment at the expense of narrowcasting aimed at specific groups. With game shows, the reruns, and American football, ratings rose.

The third chapter of *Keeping Faith?*, "The Right To Choose: Channel Four and the Public," presents both quantitative and qualitative statistical analyses of exactly who watches Channel Four and why. The authors employ statistical surveys and audience questionnaires profiling what we in the U.S. call "focus groups" of special interest viewers. This chapter treats how people watch television shows as being as significant as which shows audiences select. Some of the respondants to the questions are very amusing. One subject says Channel Four is "a wee trendy channel" and enjoys the special interest programs. Others only watch the basketball and fishing shows—sports not offered by the BBC or ITV. One voice comments, "It always looks boring." Yet not all comments are critical, although the majority reprinted by the authors seem to be. "With Channel Four there is always something new," says a more positive viewer. "They are much more daring, which is good," says another. As the authors conclude the section, "[N]ot all comparison with BBC-2 seem flattering." Overall, Channel Four is seen as having more sex, violence, and bad language. What is striking about the data is the diversity of the responses to Channel Four's offerings.

Finally, the authors conclude their study with an attempt to answer the questions "Is Channel Four a success or a failure? Too extreme or not extreme enough? An extension of the public service tradition in broadcasting or its deathknell?" By reviewing their data carefully, they come to the not unsurprising—but brutally honest—determination, "We have no simple answers to these questions."

The dissatisfaction with Channel Four, so frankly expressed and carefully documented in *Keeping Faith?*, is widespread in England. In addition to critiques from friends like Docherty, Morrison, and Tracey, Channel Four has been attacked by former staffers for a variety of shortcomings. Perhaps most damaging was Patrick Stoddard and Alex Sutherland's broadside "Paradise Paralysed" in the April 23, 1989, *Times* of London. They claimed that Channel Four ignored its mandate in its quest for high ratings and abandoned minority audiences, independent producers, and workers alike. The resulting "cheap programmes made cheaply" has meant that the channel is excessively dependent on imported U.S. shows and its own recent commissions are inferior to what the BBC and ITV produces. In another recent article, John Ranelagh, former assistant to Jeremy Isaacs and a commissioning editor during the early days of the channel, concluded, "A first-class Left-wing channel would have been better than a mediocre balanced one. But neither was offered. Channel Four was not balanced, and it was not—despite glorious exceptions—first rate."

As the authors of *Keeping Faith?* remark in their conclusion, "It would be disastrous if the channel settled into the rhythms of the past five years." They call for change, asking that the channel stay "one step slightly ahead and to the side" before they undertake their next survey, slated to coincide with the channel's tenth anniversary in 1992. It is good advice, not only for those in charge at Channel Four but for U.S. public television as it faces the challenges of the 1990s.

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# Narrating a Nation

**Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation**
by Ella Shohat; Austin: University of Texas Press,1989; 312 pp.; $30.00 (cloth), $13.95 (paper)

**Ammiel Alcalay**

THE ISRAELI CINEMA, while certainly achieving a certain measure of success and accomplishment, remains dwarfed—despite their stagnation in recent years—by other giants of the Middle Eastern film industry. The remarkable thing about Ella Shohat's *Israeli Cinema* is that it manages to not only sustain but even pique our interest in films we might not necessarily want or even have the opportunity to see. She accomplishes this by using the films as raw material for the subtext (and subtitle) of her book "East/West and the Politics of Representation." By doing this, Shohat has produced an impressively "representative" work, one whose ostensible subject—Israeli film itself—by no means limits its significance. With its combination of condensed plot analysis deftly exposing the ideological significance of recurring images, and its skillful weaving of social, cultural, and political history, the book serves as a model for the intelligible presentation of any national cinema.



Jewish refugees evacute the old city of Jerusalem in *Hill 24 Doesn't Answer*, one of the films in the "heroic-nationalist genre" analyzed by Ella Shohat in *Israeli Cinema*, which sheds light on the myriad cultures and representational battles in the Middle East.



*A Very Narrow Bridge*, a love story as allegory, is discussed in Shohat's chapter, "The Return of the Repressed: The Palestianian Wave in Recent Israeli Cinema."

This effect in no way detracts from the very specific imagery and problematic that Israeli film, and Shohat's presentation of it, encompasses. The very real implications of these representational battles, in political and human terms, make Shohat's book an essential guide to ground constantly being pulled out from under us as the conglomerate image-making machine relentlessly reduces the ever dwindling pool of reality available to a larger audience. Serving as a virtual warehouse of no less loaded but larger issues, the scene from which Israeli film emerges is much more dense and textured than the films would ever intimate. As Shohat points out in her introduction:

> A veritable palimpsest of historical influences, Israel stands at the point of convergence of multiple cultures, languages, traditions, and political tendencies. Israeli cinema, as the mediated expression of multiplicity, is necessarily marked by the struggle of competing class and ethnic discourses, of conflicting ideological impulses and political visions, most obviously by the conflict with Arabs generally and the Palestinians in particular, as well as by tensions between Oriental Sephardi Jews and European-origin Ashkenazi Jews, between religious and secular, between "left" and "right." Geographically set in the East, the dominant Israeli imaginary constantly inclines toward the West.

It is precisely this constant interplay between the finished images and the scene from which they emerge, often seen through the eyes of the audience, that marks the sensitivity and range of Shohat's project. Beginning with film itself (the fascination with "exotic" footage of the Orient, an intriguing look at the development of movie theaters in Palestine, and conflicting attitudes toward cinema), the book ends with a detailed survey of the latest group of Israeli movies, "the Palestinian wave." Between these two poles, Shohat manages to categorize virtually all the Israeli films extant in groupings that are never reductive but always provide the reader with a context that serves to illuminate both the films themselves and the particular circumstances that have dictated the choices and strategies employed to frame their subjects. Here, for instance, is an excerpt from her analysis of *Hill 24 Doesn't Answer*, one of the films from what Shohat dubs "The Heroic-Nationalist Genre":

> Seen largely within combat circumstances, the Arabs are almost always presented in long shot. When the battles take place at night, the spectator is completely distanced from their humanity. Their great numbers, in soldiers and tanks, contrast with their minimal impact on the spectator.... Although set during the British Mandate over Palestine, when the British were seen as enemies and violently resisted by Jewish underground movements, the film has British soldiers exert more presence than the Arabs and treats them more sympathetically. This appointing of sympathy and interest reflects a broader attention given to European history and culture, completely marginalizing that of the Arabs, an orientation continuous with policies outside of the cinema.

The issues raised by Shohat here and elsewhere, however particular they might be in each case (whether relating to the conflict between Arabs and Jews, tensions between Ashkenazi and Sephardi/Oriental Jews, or the formation of a national ethos), all come back to the question of power and control, imagery and its intended audience. The continued emphasis on the relationship between production and consumption makes *Israeli Cinema* not only an accurate social history but a remarkably nuanced look at history in the making, a trip, as it were, into the editing room of officialdom, to see both the outtakes as well as the frames banished from consciousness.

A most cogent example of this can be seen in an extremely powerful chapter recounting the representation and misrepresentation of Oriental Jews on the Israeli screen. Here, Shohat has forged an approach that any critic or scholar dealing with popular culture, its stereotypes, and the reception of that culture by the very subjects of its imagery would find worthy of emulation. Reading her descriptions of the "bourekas" genre, a particular form of Israeli kitsch aimed at the Sephardi/Oriental Jewish public, I was reminded again and again of the African American painter Robert Colescott's stunning depiction of a Black family attentively listening to the *Amos 'n' Andy Show*, at the same time spellbound and horror-struck at the notion of participating in their own degradation. The readings Shohat offers of these films are both humorous and moving without ever losing sight of either the intent of the imagery or the humanity of their viewers. In fact, it is the generosity of all of Shohat's interpretations—sometimes for films one would almost feel a moral obligation to vent spleen at—that makes the utopian allusions concluding her book all the more powerful and credible:

> The filmmakers take for granted the Zionist rejection of the Diaspora without offering any deeper analysis of the Israeli Jew as a multidimensional precipitate of millennia of rich, labyrinthine syncretic history lived in scores of countries. One is struck by a kind of cultural superficiality in Israeli cinema, a lack of reflection concerning issues that have preoccupied Jews over the centuries, issues which often have cinematic resonances.... True cinematic polyphony will emerge, most probably, only with the advent of political equality and cultural reciprocity among the three major groups within Israel—European Jews, Oriental Jews, and Palestinian Arabs. But until the advent of such a utopian moment, cultural and political polyphony might be cinematically evoked, at least, through the proleptic procedures of "anticipatory" texts, texts at once militantly imaginative and resonantly multivoiced.

Having applied an unyielding gaze, Shohat seems to have cleared the ground for these highly evocative suggestions. The very thoroughness of the project, and the fact that such few films emerge untainted by the ideological consensus, adds a whole other dimension to her intent—that of artistic possibility within the boundaries of seemingly unyielding constraints.

As Shohat whittles away at received ideas to recuperate and construct an alternative history, she stands neither inside (as a polemical partisan) nor outside (in a vacuum of supposed "objectivity"), but *alongside* her subjects, always ready to point out avenues of possibility, to delineate the space available for a critique (and a self-critique) that can lead to empowerment, and to reassert the value—in an all too bookish world—of the book as tool and weapon. It is only at this point that both filmmakers and film viewers can finally begin to see, and then construct, that whole plethora of images so conspicuously absent from these particular collective screens. Placing herself smack within those vast regions (the never metaphysical but always concrete geo-political, economic, and cultural relations between the "central" and the "marginal," whether under the rubric of the Promised Land and the Diaspora, East and West, North and South, Israel and Palestine) that have become the forbidden territory of a dominant mode of contemporary Jewish discourse whose influence often stretches far beyond its means, Shohat has established a reading that should cause U.S. film critics, scholars, and viewers to rethink their own politics regarding the accepted imagery of the contemporary Middle East.

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# The Triple Bind

**Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism**
by Trinh T. Minh-ha; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989;
173 pp.; $39.95 (cloth), $14.95 (paper)

**Liz Kotz**

TO THE FILMMAKING COMMUNITY, Trinh T. Minh-ha is best known as the Vietnamese-born director of a number of experimental documentary films: *Reassemblage*, *Naked Spaces—Living Is Round*, and *Surname Viêt, Given Name Nam*. Visually stunning, poetic, and highly idiosyncratic, these works radically question and reopen ethnographic and documentary film languages. Her films represent one part of a much larger project, loosely organized around the "problem" of how to represent a Third World, female Other. As well as making films, Trinh studied ethnomusicology and West African vernacular architecture, composes music, and has written a number of books. Her most recent is *Woman, Native, Other*.

As the title indicates, Trinh's book is as much about writing as it is "about" any of its other areas of research: postcolonial culture, feminist theory, anthropology, deconstructionist philosophy, narrative. Like her films, Trinh's writing represents a critical engagement with a number of what she terms "master discourses," the languages of human sciences that the West has used to represent itself and its Others. In the four essays published here, Trinh works to interrogate these languages and interrupt their claims to authenticity, transparency, and universality.

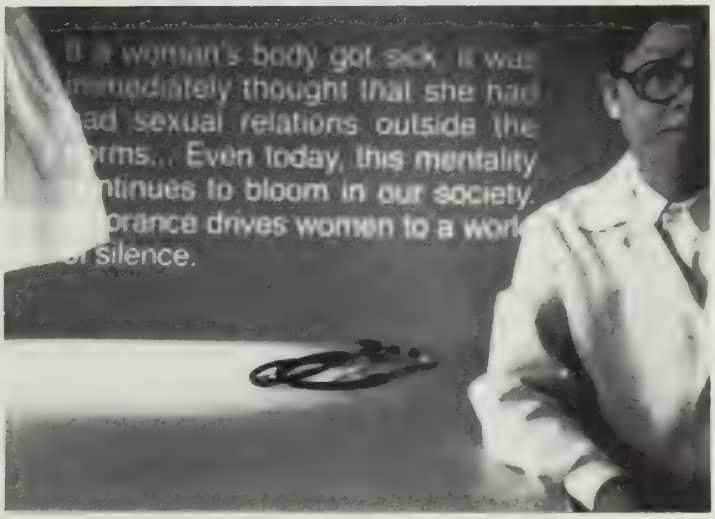
Rather than constructing a clear-cut counterdiscourse—a Third World feminist criticism posed in relation to First World male-dominated criticisms—Trinh's writings employ a very different tactic, working inside these discourses to allow other readings, other responses, impersonating them in some instances, playing with them, exposing their limits and contradictions. This makes for a very mobile ride, as Trinh shifts discourses, speaking positions, and stances, moving in and out of a number of languages of authority and resistance. She describes her method as a form of storytelling:

> From jagged transitions between the analytical and the poetical to the disruptive, always shifting fluidity of a headless and bottomless storytelling, what is exposed in this text is the inscription and de-scription of a non unitary female subject of color through her engagement, therefore also disengagement, with master discourses.

At times phrases or quotes reappear from one essay to another, as their paths intersect around certain recurring paradoxes. Writers like Roland Barthes, Zora Neale Hurston, and Andre Lorde reappear throughout the book. Trinh seems particularly intrigued by Hurston, the African American novelist and "insider anthropologist" sent by Franz Boas to collect Black folk tales, as a figure in the intersecting stories of ethnography, language, literature, and race probed in *Woman, Native, Other*. Hurston's fluid prose—her ability to play with her audience and benefactors, communicating African American experience while evading languages of truth and transparency—makes her a suggestive model for Trinh's use of language. Trinh's text reads as a search for a way of speaking about power and domination that doesn't extend its operations. Fundamentally, hers is an approach to writing that is always strategic, always positioning itself in relation to other utterances, both silent and spoken.

Trinh works within a postcolonial framework that understands modern forms of power as functioning primarily not by brute force, visible mechanisms of power, or the military interventions and imposed governments of the colonial period, but through invisible, internalized relations of power that operate via consent. This perspective intersects with many feminist analyses of power as well as the work of French philosopher Michel Foucault, who discerned the emergence of a modern liberal form of power that makes social regulation tolerable by masking its operations and incorporating opposition. In more familiar terms, Foucault's work proposes an critique of pluralism and cooptation. Similarly, Trinh refuses to describe herself, the Other, the woman of color, in Western languages designed for her submission or annihilation. A strategy of inclusion, she implies, only reinforces hegemonic power by incorporating the Other into its own language of difference as essence, division, or inferiority—what she calls "an apartheid kind of difference."

In the book's initial essay, "Commitment from the Mirror-Writing Box," Trinh explores the role of the Third World woman writer and investigates the possibility for a nonsubmissive, active relationship between writing and political struggle. The essay examines a number of propositions, from Sartre's model of the "engaged writer" with its discussion of "freedom" and "responsibility" to Western ideas of "art for art's sake," as well as other politically meaningful stances. Trinh works with a range of references, largely drawing from French philosophy and anthropology juxtaposed with writings by U.S. women of color and other Third World women. Unusual selections sit side by side, illuminating and informing each other, almost as




**Film still from *Surname Viêt Give Name Nam*, by Trinh T. Minh-ha. Like her films, Trinh's book *Woman, Native, Other* examines ethnographic and anthropological languages, postcolonial culture, feminist theory, deconstructivist philosophy, and related issues.**

if Trinh stages a series of conversations, between Roland Barthes and Toni Cade Bambara, Mitsuye Yamade and Julia Kristeva. Like the layered voices she orchestrates in *Naked Spaces*, this approach operates like a musical composition, with none of the elements subordinated but playing off and with each other.

This strategy shifts in the book's second chapter, "The Languages of Nativism: Anthropology as a Scientific Conversation of Man with Man." Like Trinh's first film, *Reassemblage*, in this essay she undertakes a more explicit attack on anthropological-ethnographic studies and their support of Western cultural hegemony. Most controversially, she criticizes many of the contemporary attempts to formulate "progressive" anthropological methods—"insider anthropology," "shared anthropology," and various efforts to "give voice" to the Other—which mask and prolong the relations of power between Western "experts" and Third World subjects, rather than unsettling them. Critiquing anthropology as "a discussion between old white men" about the Other, Trinh deploys one set of old white men—Barthes, Jacques Derrida, at times Claude Levi-Strauss, against another—Bronislaw Malinowski, Clifford Geertz, and others:

> One of the rules of my games is to echo back his words to an unexpected din or simply let them bounce around to yield most of what is being and has been said through them and despite them. I am therefore not concerned with judging the veracity of his discourses in relation to some original truth.



***Woman, Native, Other*** **includes photo/text page layouts that combine images from Trinh's films and excepts from the essays. This image from her work-in-progress *India—China* shares a page with the text, "Civilization is not mere advance in technology and in the material aspects of life. We should remember it is an abstract noun and indicates a state of living and not things (C. Rajagopalachari)."**

Drawing on the work of Ivan Illich, Trinh implicates anthropology in the ideology of "development," the latest in a long line of Western definitions of the outsider where the underlying dynamics remain constant: the barbarian, the pagan, the infidel, the wild man, the native, the underdeveloped. In such a context, debates over the terms of representation all too easily function to update and relegitimate underlying power relationships, questioning how the Other is represented—"positive images" vs. "negative images," "stereotypes" vs. "realistic depiction"—without considering who controls the definitions.

One of the cornerstones of Trinh's work is a radical rethinking of concepts of identity and difference from the standpoint of postcolonial experiences of displacement and cultural hybridization, which overlaps and complements the work of many contemporary cultural critics like Paul Gilroy, Gayatri Spivak, Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha, and Hazel Carby. Despite their sometimes disparate interests and methods, these writers—along with Trinh—have all contributed to rigorous reconceptualizations of ethnic, gender, and sexual differences, often questioning notions of an "authentic" or "true" identity in the process. At stake in these theoretical discussions are notions of identity that have long been taken as the foundation of political resistance. A very different model of identity, based on recognition of the interpenetration of First and Third Worlds, implicitly suggests the need for different forms of political action and intervention. As Trinh very succinctly and poetically states in her introduction to an issue of the journal *Discourse* (No. 8, Fall/Winter 1986-87), "What is at stake is not only the hegemony of western cultures, but also their identities as unified cultures; in other words, the realization that there is a Third World in every First World, and vice versa."

Her third chapter, entitled "Difference: A Special Third World Women Issue" (originally written for *Discourse* and revised and expanded here), represents a search for language acknowledging differences but resisting tendencies toward both universal explanations of systems of difference and the imposition of rigidly-defined differences, for instance, those represented by the token and the exception. In this context, she again turns to writings by various women of color, particularly works from "marginalized" and "feminized" genres—prose fiction, poetry, autobiography—although she reads these texts as philosophy and theory as well as literature. Her own writing, too, incorporates poetic language and forms and a personal, although never explicitly autobiographical, voice. Continually self-reflexive, Trinh's method offers not so much a systematic analysis as a circling around the questions she interrogates—"a text which recognizes its own instability." Such an attention to the various languages of theoretical utterances leads her to a poetics of silence and the unsaid as a potential language of resistance:

> Silence as a refusal to partake in the story does sometimes provide us with a means to gain a hearing. It is voice, a mode of uttering, and a response in its own right. Without utter silences, however, my silence goes unheard, unnoticed; it is simply one voice less, or more point given to the silencers.

In her final text, "Grandma's Story" (reprinted from the anthology *Blasted Allegories*), Trinh explores storytelling as an expression and repository of historical consciousness. In this mode of representation, which she sees as a function of community, Trinh develops a discourse that allows differences to emerge without domination, articulating different positions without opposition. Tracing the separation of "literature" and "history" as distinct narrative practices in Western culture, she proposes their reintegration. Working with texts by Teresa Hay Kyung Cha and Maxine Hong Kingston, Trinh explores the overlapping effects of storytelling: passing on information, inspiration, a sense of history, and emotional bonding, what she terms "a living female tradition." In many instances, she refers to traditional cultures as sites of cultural space that is female, gendered, but not subordinated; a postcolonial reappropriation of "women's space" against the movement of "genderless hegemonic standardization."

Although genre-crossing in what's categorized as literature may be acceptable nowadays, it is still quite suspect when the writing is theoretical. But this is precisely the territory of *Woman, Native, Other*. Located at the boundaries of a number of discourses and disciplines, Trinh's book explores the various resistances produced by their interplay. Her intense awareness of how languages construct political and institutional positions, her attention to silence, and her resistance to a fixed and marginalized identity as a Third World woman writer suggest a powerful strategy for politically engaged writing. Hers is a dense text, inviting readers to tease out different strands and lines of thought, often without explicitly spelling out the implications of her ideas or arguments. Although not directly addressing questions of cinema, it sketches a provocative context for such work. For those interested in a more pointed discussion of film, her article "Outside In, Inside Out" in *Questions of Third Cinema* (Jim Pines and Paul Willemen, eds., London: British Film Institute, 1989) offers a more topical application of her ideas to problems of representation and documentary filmmaking.

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# Room for New Views?

**Home Video in Libraries: How Libraries Buy and Circulate Prerecorded Home Video**
edited by Martha Dewing; Knowledge Industry Publications: White Plains, New York, 1988; 209 pp.; $45.00 (cloth)

**Margaret Cooper**

IF YOU'VE RECENTLY VISITED your local public library and happened to notice that people at the circulation desk are as likely to be checking out videocassettes as books, you've been witnessing further evidence of the small format revolution. Although nonprint materials have been familiar library features for many years, audiovisual holdings in the past were traditionally concentrated in larger institutions serving systems and branches. Moreover, they tended to consist of 16mm print collections that met the library's public programming needs and were loaned out primarily, if not exclusively, to community and educational users for group showings where no admission fee was charged.

All that changed quite dramatically after the middle of this decade. In increasing numbers, small and medium-sized libraries that had never before housed motion pictures started building half-inch video collections for home viewing by individual patrons. By 1987, a study undertaken by the American Library Association revealed that 62.5 percent of the nation's public libraries regularly loaned VHS tapes to card holders for home use.

Anyone seeking to understand more about this development will find extensive statistical documentation in *Home Video in Libraries*. Edited by Martha Dewing, publisher of *Children's Video Report Newsletter* and editor-in-chief of *Children's Video Magazine*, the book provides interpretive summaries of responses from 886 public libraries to a 1987 survey exploring acquisition policies and usage patterns for their home video collections. Case studies for 12 survey participants—representative libraries servicing highly diverse populations in different parts of the country—amplify the questionnaire results with community profiles and details about ordering policies and procedures.

As prefatory material, four short introductory chapters by an audiovisual librarian and executive personnel from Sony Video Software, Films, Inc., and the Listening Library offer general observations about the impact of home video upon libraries. Appendices include 150 titles recommended for small and medium-sized libraries by the American Library Association-Carnegie Video Project, policy suggestions for librarians beginning video collections, and resource listings devoted to selected distributors, video publications, service organizations, and miscellaneous vendors. A reprint of the American Library Association's Guidelines for Circulation of Motion Pictures and Video Productions, an interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights produced by the ALA's Intellectual Freedom Committee, also appears in this last section.

Independent producers seeking hard data for a market segment that has undergone more profound shifts than any other in recent years should find the survey results and case studies particularly instructive. The 1987 questionnaire findings indicate, for example, that despite mid-decade growth for video collections among the nation's public libraries, funds marked for tape purchases represented at best about 10 percent of material acquisitions budgets. Total expenditures for videocassettes on a yearly basis averaged slightly more than $8,000. Within a broad range extending from under $200 to over $350,000, most annual allocations were between $2,000 and $20,000. Furthermore, while collection sizes varied considerably, over half the respondents had 200 or fewer cassettes. Less than 10 percent surveyed had holdings in excess of 500 tapes.

*Home Video in Libraries* also confirms that between 1987 and 1988 the typical VHS collection was dominated by children's titles and Hollywood fare. "Special interest video," a generic term referring to instructional, documentary, and performing arts categories, was actively acquired by many of the responding libraries but in substantially smaller numbers. When they existed, upper limits on single tape expenditures, which ran anywhere from $30 to $101, most often fell between $91 and $100. Although the highest per unit price points tended not to exceed $70, the average cost of a single tape emerged as $35.

In light of these figures, the viability of the "burgeoning" library market for nonmainstream video, particularly the formally challenging, experimental variety that cannot be promoted on content alone, as well as many narrative and documentary works expressing alternative viewpoints, is open to serious question. You don't have to be a marketing analyst to realize that you need to sell a lot of tapes at these rates to come out ahead with even slim profit margins, let alone break even and cover costs. Can independents look to the 8,000-odd libraries now building VHS collections for that kind of sales volume we consider moderately healthy? For that matter, what are the chances of finding potential customers in this group that will actually prove hospitable to media that by definition is often oppositional to the mass market motion pictures, television programming, and didactic information films currently favored for VHS acquisition?

Anyone looking for answers to these questions will not find them in *Home Video in Libraries*. Even a cursory reading, however, suggests that it would be naïve to assume that libraries are now a growth area for nonmainstream video. Most of the cautionary signals are easily located in the individual case studies. Others can be found in the initial chapter, "A Librarian's View of Video in Libraries," written by Randi Pitman.

A Washington State audiovisual professional who also publishes and edits the monthly *Video Librarian*, Pitman reviews the origins and progress of the small format revolution in the nation's public libraries. In the process, he summarizes both the benefits and problems that have coincided with the introduction of video into these institutions.

For many, the decision to add VHS collections was hardly a deliberate move to provide information in a new medium. According to Pitman, it was usually a "neutral" concession to outside pressures whetted by the public appetite for tapes and fueled by the consumer video explosion. This reality notwithstanding, the new service promised to place libraries never before able to afford motion picture prints in the desirable position of being able to offer a host of varied media programs to their communities.

Almost immediately, the addition of video produced results that exceeded some of the most optimistic projections. Libraries quickly saw an influx of new patrons who checked out tapes with regularity. Heavy traffic around shelf displays contributed to a dramatic rise in the circulation figures that measure the state of a library's health to economy conscious boards frequently drawn from the local business community. But at the same time, collection management and development often involved priorities and procedures seemingly incompatible with the educational and cultural responsibilities usually attributed to public libraries.

Whereas previously institutions with 16mm holdings relied heavily on trained audiovisual specialists to make their selections, many buildings, circuits, and systems first buying half-inch tapes in the 1980s found themselves dependent upon personnel with little or no media background to perform similar functions. The results of the trend, partly the consequence of staff shortages and budget cuts, have become only too evident in the popular tendency to replicate video store offerings and to regard cassettes almost exclusively for entertainment value. Limited awareness of the range of acquisition choices, dependence on consumer publications for evaluative reviews, lack of professional guidelines regarding collection development, and inadequate funding to vary holdings top-heavy with kiddy programs and Hollywood movies have all contributed to the homogeneity of video collections that contrasts so strongly with the wide-ranging character of print resources housed in the same buildings.

This imbalance has been cause for professional concern for several years. Does its acknowledgment suggest more widespread acceptance of the type

of standards that are regularly applied to book acquisitions for the assembling of media collections." *Home Video in Libraries*, which doesn't tackle this subject, offers little evidence to indicate that major changes are forthcoming. Several contributors are optimistic about collection diversification, primarily because of video guidelines finally formulated by professional associations of librarians, or because of low-cost distribution strategies for instructional tapes or titles about the visual and performing arts. Even so, no one really addresses the issue of how much, if any, room exists for the video equivalents of the non-mass market material readily available among the books in most libraries. The recognition that space may rarely be made for certain kinds of work, however, is implicit in the first chapter's observation that institutions which circulate tapes to card holders of any age usually stay away from "controversial titles."

Minimal access for independently produced works, whether considered "controversial" because of their subjects or simply outside the mainstream because of their form or content, has been recently studied by Pitman and other researchers for the Task Force on Videocassette Distribution convened by the Rockefeller Foundation last spring. In tandem with efforts by professional associations of librarians to educate their field, such initiatives are particularly welcome for redirecting attention to the expansion of library video holdings so that they reflect more culturally diverse viewpoints and experience.

Given the consumer video affiliations of its publisher, which sponsors the New York International Home Video Market and produces several industry publications, *Home Video in Libraries* should hardly be expected to focus on the limitations of so many library collections. Or to challenge the continuing influence of mass market criteria on media acquisition in publicly funded institutions. Yet for anyone who considers such questioning a priority, the book has some serious drawbacks.

Other omissions are most evident in the selection of background information and resource listings. For example, the ongoing debate about extending "public performance" rights to tapes originally purchased for home viewing, which first arose with the convergence of consumer and institutional markets among libraries, is not sufficiently explained to make sense to any reader unfamiliar with this controversy. The conspicuous absence of a contribution from one of the small independent media distributors successfully marketing video to public libraries is also regrettable. As is the restriction of the appendix listing video distributors to only two entries associated with independent work, Facets Multimedia and Third World Newsreel.

For independent producers, the book will be primarily useful for its provision of data from a changing institutional market that clearly needs to be better understood. The fairly hefty price, however, will probably keep it off many personal reference shelves. But under any circumstances, a reading of *Home Video in Libraries* has to be supplemented by a badly needed analysis of the half-inch video revolution's impact on traditional and emerging markets for alternative media. With luck, we won't have long to wait for that kind of information to appear in print. The American Film Institute's study of this very subject is scheduled for publication in the next few months.

*Margaret Cooper is a New York-based programming and distribution consultant to media arts organizations and independent film and video producers.*

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# DOCURAMA: THE NFB'S FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



**Director Nettie Wild poses with a member of the New People's Army in her film *A Rustling of Leaves: Inside the Philippine Revolution.* This work looks at the armed rebels, the legal left, and the reactionary right.**

Courtesy National Film Board of Canada

Ray Navarro

The summer sky in Montréal is as blue as the Québec flag. For centuries an embattled territory of colonial interests and economic influences, the self-respect of Canadian culture has asserted itself for the last half-century through the country's National Film Board (NFB). Often held up as a model of government financed film production, the NFB hosted an ambitious fiftieth birthday party for itself in the form of the Salute to the Documentary/Le Documentaire Se Fête, a grand scale film series and international symposium which took place last June 16 to 25 in Montréal. The event seemed especially appropriate considering the NFB's notable documentary production record: some 6,300 titles since its founding during World War II by the legendary John Grierson. Over 1200 participants from 40 countries convened at the NFB's Montréal headquarters to debate the history and form of documentary film.

This impressive international gathering of scholars, producers, critics, and activists arrived with differing agendas, but all agreed that the controversial political connotations of much nonfiction film production have been under attack by underfunding and government censorship. At the same time, documentary has maintained its status as the medium of choice for activist and militant organizations. Can a celebration also offer a critique? A critical stance was certainly implied in one of the main questions proposed by the Salute organizers, which could be paraphrased: In an audiovisual culture steeped in commercial TV, how can independent documentary films remain an influential form?

In the conference portion of Salute, gatherings were spread out throughout the week, with each day dedicated to one of five subjects: the audience, mass media and documentary film, women's films,the control of images of developing countries, and markets. Each day's subject was further split into a morning panel discussion and groups of smaller afternoon workshops. For example, the workshops following the Market panel addressed such issues as fragmentation of the market, TV and the independent producer, and festivals and promotion. The session dedicated to women's films was not split up in this manner, however, and was instead set up as a day-long plenary session, which included a panel discussion as well as an open mic and covered various topics related to production and distribution. Although this session should have served as a pleasant counter to an otherwise rather rigidly structured conference, many of the filmmakers I spoke with afterwards though that more fruitful exchanges took place in the smaller workshops. Yet, with so many workshops to choose from on the other afternoons, many conference participants engaged in a game of musical chairs, sauntering from one colorful tent to another, seeking out the most intriguing workshop.

The rainy opening day was strangely somber, as arriving symposium participants gathered in the NFB's courtyard, huddling inside the leaky tent named after John Grierson. At first, one had to wonder what kind of salute could these puddles offer? As Canadian film historian Tom Waugh quipped, "Was this a party or a funeral?" An initial climate of confusion prevailed as people realized that many film screenings (some of which promised rare prints of excellent quality) were scheduled at the same times as related panels or workshops. As the week progressed it became apparent that the best way to negotiate such scheduling mistakes was to "sample" rather than specialize.

The screenings were subtitled "250 Documentaries from Around the World" and classed in three categories, each selected using a different

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set of criteria. "A History of the Documentary" was a survey of the work of 21 prominent producer/directors. "From Paul Tomkowicz to Oscar Thiffault" was composed of Anglo-Canadian and Québecois films from the sixties. "The Documentary of the Eighties" presented some of the best titles of the decade, chosen by an international committee of filmmakers. The entire film program ran for just over a week at five different cinemas around the city, the coziest being the artsy La Cinema Parallel (they serve espresso) and the freakiest Le Complex Desjardins (buried in a shopping mall reminiscent of *Logan's Run*).

Each morning 1,200 symposium participants gathered in one of the NFB sound studios under a giant golden-colored film reel, the fanfare announced by a ring of flags around the building à la United Nations or Olympics. This greeting was pregnant with political meaning, given the history of government-controlled media as produced by the NFB, so often subject to the shifting winds of Canadian nationalist politics. Filmmaker and poet Pierre Perrault,who spoke at the opening day's plenary session, did not fail to inform us that the Québec flag had been excluded from this display of colors. In the context of Montréal, a stronghold of French Canadian culture, the politics of language is often foregrounded. But, a vestige of linguistic and cultural imperialism seemed to have gone unnoticed by Salute's architects: How could we undertake a critique of contemporary documentary, some of the best of which (both critique and films) has been produced in the Third World, when the discussion is framed within the big three imperialist languages: English, Spanish, and French?

At the initial session of the symposium, "The Audience," Québecois anthropologist Jean-Pierre Desaulniers reminded us of television's omnipotence in telling terms when he asserted that one million TV sets being turned off was the equivalent of 700 football stadiums being emptied. This comment, along with *Jump Cut* coeditor Julia Lesage's presentation of the infotainment phenomenon, became common denominators for the entire symposium. TV or not TV? was no longer the question here; rather it was which TVs? whose TVs? According to Lesage, the advent of the five-minute news feature, similar to the stories in the tabloid press, has ripped off documentary by using similar visual techniques while offering none of the latter's critical aspects. For instance, documentary film's codes of "authenticity"—talking heads, direct cinema styles, etc.—have been liberally borrowed and applied to superficial sensationalist topics.

A great deal of audience research has found that infotainment programming, from *Entertainment Tonight* to *60 Minutes*, has largely superseded the concept of documentary. According to a tedious but revealing report prepared for the NFB entitled *Documentaries and the Audience for Information Programming* (included in the materials given to conference participants), the position of documentaries in the broadcast schedules is especially difficult to analyze, because the category has been expunged from station logging requirements used in ratings surveys in Canada, "apparently as the result of an organizational oversight." The report goes on to provide other troubling observations, including the fact that while most Canadians have heard of the NFB, less than five percent can recall ever having seen an NFB-produced documentary. There may be light at the end of the tunnel, since ratings surveys do testify to a huge audience for infotainment, which may be an attractive egg for future documentary filmmakers to try and crack. Meanwhile, in a workshop called "The Documentary and Social Change," an exciting South African videotape, *The Railway Strike*, revealed the grim reality for so many contemporary documentary makers. How are informative and accurate representations of political situations produced in a climate of harsh government censorship and a complete lack of funding for independent projects? The political ramifications for South African documentary producers can be so threatening that they are not able to reveal their identities for fear of retribution.

The film versus video opposition reared its greying head during "The Chemical vs. the Electronic" panel, intended to question television's lack of interest in the "lush filmic" image as a meaningful experience. The video apparatus itself was charged with "attenuating" or weakening documentary films when they are broadcast due to scanlines, electronic noise, etc. Indian filmmaker Anand Patwardhan shifted the terms of this well-rehearsed debate by speaking of the political difficulty in having any meaningful documentary aired in his country. In India the question is how can one bring social issue media to a large audience via broadcast or cinematic release in the face of government and religious fundamentalist censorship. His *Bombay—Our City*, a controversial work on urban housing, along with a number of other documentaries, have been the focus of a series of court battles between producers and broadcasters. As a result, government TV officials have been jailed for their refusal to air award-winning Indian films. The issue in this context is less film versus video than independent producers versus state-controlled mass media.

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Although women constitute 57 percent of the NFB staff, they were represented by only between 30 to 40 percent of the symposium panelists. Moreover, women are allocated only five percent of the NFB's production resources. These conditions provided the background for the feminist criticism voiced by the panelists invited to discuss women's films. Hollie Molenaar, a documentary filmmaker from the Netherlands, proposed putting aside "obsolete statements from the seventies" centered on a division of form and content, recommending instead that women's documenta-

ries consider the relationship between women's films and women's history as well as developing new models for relationships between women directors and production crews. These issues, Molenaar continued, should not be framed in terms of a universal, inherent "woman's vision" but in the context of specific conditions of filmmaking. The NFB's women's production unit, Studio D, has exerted influence in that regard by encouraging three particular types of work: the exemplary portrait, the conversion narrative, and the ethnographic tribute. According to another panelist, Montréal-based documentarian Sophie Bissonette, this development of a feminist canon at Studio D has coincided with individualist tendencies in the women's movement.

The following day's discussion, dominated almost exclusively by men, addressed, "Who Should Control the Images of the Developing Countries?" In the only session framed as a question, Mexican filmmaker and film school director Eduardo Maldonado's response was especially appropriate: One must not seek an answer to such a question, but a way out of it. Since the answer is obvious—the countries themselves—Maldonado observed the danger of accepting an inquiry posed in these terms, since the questioner usually assumes that the less economically developed countries are also less morally or culturally developed. Maldonado countered these ideas in a simple rephrasing: "Who should generate the images of the developing countries, and also of those less-developed economically?" An important correlate to this was stated by Indian filmmaker Vijaya Mulay earlier in the week when she emphasized the existence of "developing" countries within the "developed" and thus her hesitation to speak of her own country as "developing."

It was Haile Gerima who responded directly to Indian filmmaker Manjira Datta's earlier call for a passionate response to contemporary conditions for Third World production. Gerima, an Ethopian filmmaker who lives and teaches in Washington, D.C., proclaimed that African peoples are starving for self-representations and filmmakers must understand that the ideologically bankrupt images of Africa that are circulated have dangerous effects. "African filmmakers must make sure that [governments give priority to] cinema just as they would food and water," he remarked. Gerima also described cinema as a powerful weapon: "You can drop one videotape on a village and destroy their culture." Coproductions between First and Third World producers received a fair share of criticism when panelists reminded the symposium that until Third World producers are able to become self-sufficient, documentary images will always be salutes to imperialist culture.

A discussion of documentary films in the marketplace capped off the week. The sessions devoted to this topic occupied a place at the opposite end of the schedule from "the audience," implying a separation between the two concepts. But this effort to maintain a clear-cut division seems


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impossible to sustain. A quick review of symposium literature and opinions expressed reveals the many compromises documentary must face. Given the tenuous position of documentaries in today's market, establishing some kind of relationship with television was discussed as a necessary move on the part of documentary advocates. With theatrical distribution almost entirely dominated by fiction features, the promise that home video and cable television seem to offer to documentary work may provide an opportunity to reclaim viewers. These were the practical issues which dominated discussions at Salute. The symposium's focus, "exploring or attenuating reality?" shifted from techno-fetishistic raps on the aesthetic conflicts between film and video, concentrating instead on the practicalities of production and distribution.

Perhaps it was in this unspoken concensus among participants that Salute was able to offer a window onto the debates of the nineties. No one present was naive. The market as a determining factor of production was kicked around by all. But none of the discussions felled the tree of TV's influence or of Hollywood's dominance. The following conclusions seem fair: from a socially committed perspective, the documentarian will cling to the concept of an audience able to gain some kind of genuine political experience from viewing his/her nonfiction film. Granted, the markets available are fragmented, different for different types of productions. This will condemn many of today's documentary films to electronic reproduction. But quick and dirty documentaries, like those being made by the AIDS activist movement, Nicaraguan television, or *The Railway Strike* from South Africa, produced on video with consumer formats for specific audiences, seem able to regain some of the ideological territory lost by big-budget productions to the consumer-oriented eighties. Here the audience is presumed to be specific, not mass, distribution local, not global. Unfortunately, too little consideration was given to works of this type. Too often attention was only on huge budget theatrical features.

Debates at the Salute symposium were transformed into constructive collaboration when several producers formed the Global Organization of Documentary Video and Filmmakers. Toronto-based filmmaker Laura Sky was instrumental in pulling together various sectors present at the international gathering and asserting the viability of a new organization for documentarians during the final plenary session. With a goal of facilitating international communication and providing often isolated independents with peer support and advocacy, the group intends to promote documentary production worldwide. More information can be obtained by writing: André Pâquet, 1166 Rue Lajoie, Montréal, Québec H2V 1N9, Canada.

The Salute's extensive and highly diverse film program served to complement the international participation in the symposium. Such rarely screened classics as Octavio Getino and Fernando Solanas' *Hour of the Furnaces* were screened along with recent Québecois gems like Marilu Maillet's *Journal Inachevé* (*Unfinished Diary*), which underscores the painful experience of exile in the shadow of Latin American conflicts. Other films such as Tete Moraes' *Terra para Rose* and Nettie Wild's *A Rustling of Leaves: Inside the Philippine Revolution* were praised by audiences and critics. Wild's 1988 film confirms that feature- length documentary films are still one of the most effective means of educating people about social issues. A chilling account of the violent social conflicts underlying the facade of consensus which Corazon Aquino's government presents to the U.S., the film includes amazing footage of guerrillas fighting for liberation from the U.S.-supported regime, as well as political candidates touring the countryside during an election campaign. *Terra para Rose* sensitively depicts a group of farmers struggling against government brutality in Brazil. The prize? Their right to farm some of the rich red earth which they claim as collective property. A passionate score accompanies this feature, which includes a frightening sequence in which disco music is overwhelmed by the sound of threatening army helicopters. Another memorable film screened in the "Documentary of the Eighties" section at the festival was Dmitri Barchtchevski's epic *Risk 2*. The Soviet film, made in 1988, is a montage of archival footage from the Stalin era presented as a critique of Soviet nuclear weapons policy, as well as Stalin's draconian Cold War domestic measures. This film explodes preconceptions of a uncritical Soviet film world and includes some sensational juxtapositions, for instance cutting between scenes where both Hitler and Stalin are shown playing with their dogs, comfortably at ease with their absolute power.

A curious take on documentary history can be sketched on the basis of the selections made by 21 well-known documentarians, a group that included old world luminaries like Jean Rouch and Joris Ivens, as well as a number of Canadians and other Americans like Cuban Santiago Alvarez and Emile de Antonio, Julia Reichart, and Mira Nair from the U.S. *Nanook of the North* was probably the film most frequently chosen, with *Land without Bread* running a close second. Joris Ivens' list was idiosyncratic enough to include *Salt of the Earth* (curiously absent from the program) and Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*. Chaplin's feature was the last film shown at le Documentaire Se Fête, where what could have been a solemn salute, a kind of period punctuating the programmer's intentions, instead provided a raucous, exclamation point. Happy birthday, NFB!

*Ray Navarro is a writer and video activist living in New York City.*



**Included in the Panorama of the Eighties section of the Salute to the Documentary festival was Soviet director Dmitri Barchtchevski's film on World War II and the atom bomb, *Risk 2*. Using U.S., Soviet, and German footage, the film is an analytic documentary showing the historical causes behind the super powers' confrontation.**

Courtesy National Film Board of Canada

## IN BRIEF

This month's festivals have been compiled by Kathryn Bowser, director of the **FIVF Festival Bureau.** Listings do not constitute an endorsement & since some details change faster than we do, we recommend that you contact the festival for further information before sending prints or tapes. If your experience differs from our account, please let us know so we can improve our reliability.

### Domestic

BIRMINGHAM INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, May, AL. Competition for independent, commercial & student film/video producers of ed. media, held since 1972. Awards presented in several cats & incl. best of fest film or video (Electra statuette & $1,000); best 16mm & best video (Silver Electra & $500), best of category to top film & top video (certificate & $200); finalists (certificate). Works must be under 60 min. Judging process takes place in April & awards gala held in May. Entry fees: $15-40. Format:

16mm, 1/2". Deadline: Jan. 31. Contact: Birmingham International Educational Film Festival, attn: Margaret Miller, Box 2641, Birmingham, AL 35291-0665; (205) 250-2550.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY VIDEO FESTIVAL, March, MA. Under theme Women's Agenda for the New Century: Where Do We Go From Here?, fest compiles and distributes tapes on women's issues to public access cable TV centers throughout the US after cablecast in Boston area. In 1988, fest rented satellite time as part of *Deep Dish TV*. For this yr's program, fest asks women throughout world to produce 1-min. interviews to serve as thread for program, as well as interviews w/ women on most important issues of 1990s. Works must be produced or coproduced by women. Format: 8mm, 1/2", 3/4". Deadline: Jan. 1. Contact: Int'l Women's Day Video Festival, Box 176, Boston, MA 02130; (617) 628-8826.

MEDIAMIX UNITED STATES SUPER 8MM FILM FESTIVAL, Feb. 9, NJ. Second annual fest for works originating on super 8mm film, held at Rutgers Univ. in New Brunswick. All genres (animation, doc, experimental, fiction, personal) accepted. Entry fee: $10. Deadline: Jan. 1. Contact: Rutgers University Film Co-op, Media Services, Kilmer Library, Avenue E, Piscataway, NJ 08854; (201) 932-4685/249-9623.

NEW DIRECTORS/NEW FILMS, April, NY. Prestigious program, in 18th yr, provides survey of world cinema. Its dedicated purpose is discovery of new & unrecognized narrative features, docs & shorts w/ little prior NY or US exposure. 25-30 films programmed at the Roy & Niuta Titus Theatre at MoMA, shown to capacity audiences. Cosponsored by MoMA and Film Society of Lincoln Center, which presents NY Film Fest. Format: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Jan. 3. Contact: Marian Masone, Film Society of Lincoln Center, 140 W. 65th St., New York, NY 10023; (212) 877-1800.

NEW ENGLAND FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, May 17-19, MA. Held this yr in conjunction w/ annual Nat'l Alliance of Media Arts Centers conference in Boston, 15th annual *Boston Globe*-sponsored fest is open to New England ind. & student film/videomakers. Ind. entrants must reside in ME, VT, NH, CT, MA or RI; student entrants must be college level w/ work completed while attending school at NE colleges; NE permanent residents attending out-of-state colleges also eligible. Narrative, doc, animation & experimental works of all lengths accepted. Must be completed in previous 2 yrs. Awards: $8,000 in cash & services, incl. best of fest award ($2,500) & Boston Globe Critic's Choice Award ($2,500). Entry fees: $30 (ind.), $20 (student). Format: 16mm, super 8, 3/4", 1/2". Deadline: Feb. 2 (ind.), Feb. 12 (students). Contact: New England Film & Video Festival, Arts Extension Service, Div. of Continuing Education, 604 Goodell Bldg., Univ. of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003; (413) 545-2360.

RETIREMENT RESEARCH FOUNDATION NATIONAL MEDIA AWARDS, May, IL. Deadline: Feb. 1. Film, video & TV productions that sensitively explore issues related to aging accepted for competition, which aims to encourage excellence in media on the subject & "capture authentic images of older persons...illuminating the challenge & the promise of an aging society." Subjects range from intergenerational relationships, to escalating cost of long-term care, to the aging mind. Last yr more than 400 producers submitted work. Cats: independent films/videos; TV/theatrical film fiction; TV nonfiction; training films/videos. Awards: 1st place in each cat


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(Wise Old Owl statuette & $5,000), 2nd prize awards ($1,000), honorable mention awards ($500), community video award in TV nonfiction cat ($2,000), special achievement award ($5,000). Entries must be produced in US & released or initially broadcast or cablecast btwn Jan 1 & Dec. 31, 1989. Format: 16mm, 3/4", 1/2". No entry fee. Deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: Ellen Meyers, project director, Retirement Research Foundation National Media Awards, Center for New Television, 912 S. Wabash, Chicago, IL 60605; (312) 427-5446.

WOMEN ONE WORLD FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL, Feb. 1-3, NY. Accepts films & videos by women in any genre, on any topic; fest to be held at WOW Cafe, women's experimental theatre in NYC. Deadline: Dec. 31. Contact: Harriet Hirshorn, 20 Clinton St., #3F, New York, NY 10002; (212) 674-46736.

## Foreign

BOMBAY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL FOR DOCUMENTARY AND SHORT FILMS, Mar. 1-7, India. Debut edition of competitive fest. Program incl. competition, information, retrospective & Spectrum India sections, as well as market. Films entered in competition must be produced btwn Jan. 1, 1988 & Nov. 30, 1989. Int'l jury of 7 filmmakers & critics, incl. 2 from India, determine cash awards of Indian rupees 250,000 (about $15,000) to Best Films in following cats: 40 min. or less nonfiction; over 40 min. nonfiction; 55 min. or less fiction (incl. animation). Films not selected for competition section may be shown in info section. Format: 35mm, 16mm; preselection on 3/4" & 1/2". Deadline: Dec. 15. Contact: Vijay B. Chandra, festival director, Films Division, Government of India, 24-Dr. Gopalrao Deshmukh Marg., Bombay, PIN 400026, India; tel: (91) 22 361 461; telex: 011 75463 FD-IN. US contact: Ms. Homai Saha, Consul (PR), Consulate General of India, 3 E. 64 St., New York, NY 10021; (212) 879-8048; fax: (212) 988-6423.

TAMPERE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Mar. 7-11, Finland. Celebrating 20th anniversary, competitive showcase for shorts in Nordic region (Tampere is Finland's "Second City"), showing nearly 300 films (70 in competition) from 30 countries each yr to audiences of about 14,000. Program also incl. 10-15 retros & tributes, as well as exhibits & seminars. Entries should conform to general themes of peace & social equality; educational, advertising & tourist films not accepted for competition. Animated, doc & fiction/experimental films may compete for Grand Prix (bronze Kiss statuette & 15,000 FIM—about $3,600), category prizes (statuette & 2,000 FIM—about $470), special prize, diplomas of merit & other cash prizes. Children's films accepted in each cat. Films must be under 35 min. (docs up to 60 min.) & completed after Jan. 1, 1989. Format: 35mm, 16mm. Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: Tampere Film Festival, Box 305, SF-33101 Tampere, Finland; tel: 358 31 35681; telex: 22448 tam sf; fax: 358 31 196756.

VIENNA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (VIENNALE), March, Austria. Noncompetitive fest, now in 29th yr., each yr shows about 100 int'l films, w/ special nod to young directors & independent producers. Entries must be Austrian premieres; Austrian distribs check out lineup. Long & short films accepted. Format: 35mm, 16mm; preselection on cassette. Deadline: Jan. 15. Contact: Helmut Dimko, Viennale, Urania, Uraniastrasse 1, 1010 Vienna, Austria; tel: 753284; telex: 113985 filmf a.

# IN AND OUT OF PRODUCTION

## Renee Tajima

Jack Kerouac coined the term the "beat generation" in the 1950s, using it to describe the sensibility shared by those alienated from the status quo of middle-class U.S. culture. They sought alternatives in religion, philosophy, art, and drugs of all kinds, as a means of gaining new experiences. Maria Beatty's new one-hour video, **Gang of Souls**, explores the generation of Beat writers who brought these forms and experiences into their work. The tape maps the evolution of this uniquely American strain of poetic consciousness, including artists who were influenced by it: Ed Sanders, Anne Waldman, John Giorno, Jim Carroll, Marianne Faithful, even Richard Hell, Lydia Lunch, and Henry Rollins. Made over a one-and-a-half year period, Beatty produced the tape with support from Downtown Community TV Center, Media Bureau/The Kitchen, the Brooklyn Arts Council Filmsearch Program, and New York Foundation for the Arts New Works Program. *Gang of Souls*: Video Data Bank, Columbus Dr. at Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL 60603; (312) 443-3793 or Giorno Poetry Systems, 222 Bowery, New York, NY 10003; (212) 925-6372.

Dan Weisman has created **World Video** as an "avant-garde, cutting-edge, art music revolutionary new age global village" package of tapes suitable for viewers of all ages. The three half-hour and hour programs are meant to be viewer controlled—that is, view at your own pace, whether a minute at a time, five, 10 minutes, or the full two hours. The tapes include *Commune*, based on the play by Richard Schechner's 1972 Performance Group about acid, Vietnam, and Sharon Tate. *Mardi Gras 1988* pays tribute to Mardi Gras Day, Fat Tuesday, and features original music and performances by New Orleans' Shot Down in Equador Jr., and Austin, Texas' Kelly and the Fireballs. *The Road Trip/Infinity City* features Shot Down in Equador Jr. on the road. *World Video*: Box 850425, New Orleans, LA 70185.

Oklahoma natives Jana Birchum and Tori Breitling have completed **Wind Grass Song: The Voice of Our Grandmothers**, with support from the Southwest Alternate Media Project, the Oklahoma State Council for the Arts, Hitachi Corporation, the Kirkpatrick Foundation, and First Interstate Bank of Oklahoma. The 20-minute documentary film looks at the lives of women during the settlement period, through the multicultural voices of Great Plains elders. These Native American, African American, and white women, all over the age of 85, speak of their experiences during the early days of statehood, living in the wide open prairie landscape. Five years in the making, *Wind Grass Song* reconjures the stories filmmakers Birchum and Breitling heard as girls from their own grandmothers. It premiered in October at a gala opening at the the Dobie Theater in Austin, Texas. *Wind Grass Song*: Liatris Media, Box 4600, Austin, TX 78765; (512) 476-5714.

What is it like to live with AIDS? What kind of support do people with AIDS need? Mark Dworkin's new 30-minute video, **Finding Our Way Together: People with AIDS and Their Caregivers**, gives viewers an opportunity to explore these questions from the perspective of people who are living with AIDS. It shows how the tape's participants, with varying kinds and degress of HIV disease and reflecting a wide range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds, interact with their caregivers. It also allows caregivers a chance to express the challenges and rewards of these relationships. The tape represents a collaboration of five Seattle organizations that provide education and support services for PWAs with Dworkin and his production company, Rain Country Video. Dworkin is currently in production on a new, 58-minute tape entitled **A Very Beautiful Strength**, documening the story of the thousands of North Americans who have been drawn to Nicaragua during the past several years. It is the newest project in the *Moving Images* series, which now includes seven documentaries about contemporary Central America. *Finding Our Way Together* and *Moving Images: A Northwest Video Project in Central America*, 2408 E. Valley, Seattle, WA 98112; (206) 323-9461.



**Maria Beatty's video *Gang of Souls* explores the sensibility and influence of the Beat writers of the 1950s, including poet Diane di Prima.**

Courtesy videomaker


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# CLASSIFIEDS

The Independent's **Classifieds** column includes all listings for "Buy • Rent • Sell," "Freelancers" & "Postproduction" categories. It is restricted to members only. Each entry has a **250 character limit** & costs **$20 per issue**. Ads exceeding this length will be edited. Payment must be made at the time of submission. Anyone wishing to run a classified ad more than once must pay for each insertion & indicate the number of insertions on the submitted copy. Each classified ad must be typed, double-spaced & worded exactly as it should appear.

Deadlines for **Classifieds** will be respected. These are the 8th of each month, **two months** prior to the cover date, e.g., January 8 for the March issue. Make check or money order—no cash, please—payable to FIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.

## Buy • Rent • Sell

WANTED: Betacam camera/deck or co-buyer/partner. For Sale or Rent: 3/4" edit syst. as low as $375/wk in your home or $8/hr at our studio. Will trade for Betacam use or fundraising help. Sony 5850 w/ RM440 & Sony 2860 w/ ECS90 & systems, $1,950/b.o. Gary (212) 768-1600.

FOR SALE: Angenieux 9.5-95mm zoon lens w/ Arriflex 16BL blimped housing. $2000. Call Ralph (718) 284-0223.

## Freelancers

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WHATEVER YOU'RE LOOKING FOR, I can find. Call or write for brochure. Design Research, Dept. B, Box 1503, Bangor ME, 04401; (207) 941-0838.

FILM SEARCH: We obtain hard-to-find films (pre-1970) on tape. We are expensive, but good. 5 searches for $5 & SASE. Video Finders, Box 4351-453ind, L.A., CA 90078.

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TRANSCRIPT SPECIALIST: Transcripts from audio tapes, speedy turn-around, specializing in documentary. References: Kevin Rafferty (*Atomic Cafe*), Robert Stone (*Radio Bikini*). $2.50/page. Disk copies available. Call for arrangements. (407) 645-2638.

NETWORK CREDITED director, videographer w/ Sony broadcast 3/4", 3/4" SP & Beta pkgs from $300/day. Rental or experienced crews avail. Also complete production services incl. producing, directing & VO casting. Michael, MI-RO Productions, (212) 757-7654.

BETACAM SP packages available: New BVW-507 (w/ 700 line resolution); BVW35 & BVW-505 also avail. Your choice of field production package comes w/ award-winning videographer, Toyota 4-Runner & competitive rates. Call Hal at (201) 662-7526.

FILM EDITOR: Documentary, educational or dramatic film. New York City, New Jersey or Philadelphia area. Call Jack Walz (609) 895-7817.

EXPERIENCED ATTORNEY to care for your personal & business related legal matters. General practice includes negotiation & review of contracts, litigation, real estate, negligence & medical malpractice. Free consultation. Peter Foster (212) 254-9368.

CINEMATOGRAPHER & SOUNDPERSON to work on independent films. Allan Vincent (718) 729-7481. Reel upon request. Long live independence!

VIDEO EDITOR w/ own equipment available for interesting projects. Reasonable rates (time code reader/generator). Call Veronique (212) 228-4254.

16MM PRODUCTION PKG from $150/day. Complete camera, lighting & sound equip. avail. w/ asst. & transport to location. (CP16 crystal, fluid head, Lowels, sungun, Nagra, radio mikes & more.) Postprod. also avail. Negotiable rates. Tom (201) 692-9850.

CAMERAMAN with own equipment available. 16 SR, 35 BL, superspeed lenses, sound equipment, lighting, van, passport, certified scuba diver, speak French, a little Spanish. Call (212) 929-7728.

SOUNDMAN: Nagra, Sennheisers, Micron radio equipment. Feature & documentary credits. Bilingual & passport. Very reasonable rates. For booking, call Memo at CEM crews. (212) 620-0084.

## Postproduction

BOB BRODSKY & TONI TREADWAY: Super 8 & 8mm film-to-video mastering w/ scene-by-scene color correction to 1", Betacam & 3/4". By appointment only. Call (617) 666-3372.

NEGATIVE MATCHING: 16mm, super 16, 35mm. Credits include Jim Jarmusch, Wim Wenders, Lizzie Borden & Bruce Weber. Reliable results at reasonable rates. One White Glove, Tim Brennan, 321 W. 44th St., #411, New York, NY 10036; (212) 265-0787.

BROADCAST QUALITY EDITING: Edit from Betacam, 3/4" or 3/4" SP. $99/hr including operator, switcher, slo-mo. 50% discount on DVE for AIVF members. Call HDTV Enterprises, Inc., near Lincoln Center (212) 874-4524.

POST ON THE COAST: Relaxed time-code editing in Maine, hassle free, multi-format (3/4" SP & 1/2", incl. SEG, freezes, Chyron, camera) software based A/B system w/ edit list generation. Cuts only as low as $20/hr. AIVF discount. Expanded Video (207) 773-7005.

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TOTAL SUPER 8 SOUND Film Services. All S/8 production, postprod., editing, sync sound, sound mix, multitrack, single & double system sound editing, transfers, stills, etc. Send SASE for rate sheet or call Bill Creston, 727 6th Ave., NY, NY 10010; (212) 924-4893.

BETACAM OR 3/4" SP location shooting as low as $300/day. Betacam & 3/4" SP to 3/4" SP editing w/ editor from $35/hr. Vega wireless mic. & Motorola MX-350 rental as low as $30/day. Call Michael at Electronic Visions (212) 691-0375.

SOUND TRANSFERS: Convenient downtown location. FX library, digital sampling, transfers from & to 16/35mm, 1/4" mono & stereo (w/ SMPTE), cassette, CD, DAT & mini Nagra SN. Best rates (212) 255-8698.

FOR RENT: 3/4" off-line editing room (Brand new Sony 5850, 5800, RM440). Very reasonable rates, convenient midtown location in suite w/ other filmmakers. Xerox & FAX available. Call Jane at (212) 929-4795 or Deborah at 226-2579.

16MM FLATBEDS FOR RENT: 6-plate flatbeds for rent in your workspace or fully equipped downtown editing room w/ 24 hr. access. Cheapest rates in NYC for independent filmmakers. Call Philmaster Productions (212) 873-4470.

16MM CUTTING ROOMS: 8-plate & 6-plate fully equipped rooms, sound transfer facilities, 24-hr access. Downtown, near all subways and Canal St. Reasonable, negotiable rates. (212) 925-1500

## FIVF THANKS

The Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), the foundation affiliate of the Association of Independent Video and Filmmakers (AIVF), supports a variety of programs and services for the independent producer community, including publication of *The Independent*, maintenance of the Festival Bureau, seminars and workshops, an information clearinghouse, and a grant making program. None of this work would be possible without the generous support of the following agencies, foundations and organizations: The New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Fund, the Beldon Fund, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Consolidated Edison Company of New York, the Benton Foundation, and the Funding Exchange.

# NOTICES

**Notices** are listed free of charge. AIVF members receive first priority; others are included as space permits. The Independent reserves the right to edit for length.

Deadlines for **Notices** will be respected. These are the 8th of the month, **two months** prior to cover date, e.g., January 8 for the March issue. Send to: Independent Notices, FIVF, 625 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

## Conferences • Workshops

ASST. DIRECTORS TRAINING PROGRAM sponsored by Directors Guild & Alliance of Motion Picture & TV Producers. 400 days on-the-job training & regular seminars as 2nd asst. directors. Deadline: Jan. 12, 1990. Contact: Asst. Directors Training Program, 14144 Ventura Blvd. Ste. 270, Sherman Oaks, CA 91423; (818) 995-3600, ext. 100.

BAY AREA VIDEO COALITION WORKSHOPS: Professional Video Prod. Techniques, Dec. 9, 10, 16 & 17; Making & Repairing Cables, Dec. 6; Time Code in Theory & Practice, Dec. 12-14; Basic Editing Aesthetics, Dec. 4; Basic Engineering, Dec. 12-14; Editing on the CMX 3100, Dec. 2 & 3; Professional Results From Consumer Video Cameras, Dec. 9. Contact: Education Program, BAVC, 1111 17th St., San Francisco, CA 94107.

CENTER FOR NEW TELEVISION Video Workshops: Editing Workshop, Dec. 4 & 6; Desktop Computer Animation, Dec. 9; Legal Aspects of Film & Video Prod., Dec. 12; ENG/Broadcast Newsgathering Seminar, Dec. 5 & 7. Contact CNTV, 912 So. Wabash Ave., Chicago, IL 60605; (312) 427-5446.

FILM/VIDEO ARTS offers the following new courses & workshops: CPB, IPS & Independents (cosponsored by AIVF), Intro to Sandine Image Processor, Amiga Titles, Amiga Sound, Computer Graphics Overview, How to Succeed in the Movie Industry, Arri SR Camera Workshop, The Creative Process, Art of CamCorders, Myth Making, History of Documentary. For brochure & info. contact: F/VA, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9361.

FORUM ON MULTI-CULTURALISM sponsored by New York Council for the Humanities Dec. 7, 4 p.m. at the NY Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., New York City. Panel members Jay Kaplan, Mary Schmidt Campbell, Mary Hays & John Kuo Wei Tchen will address Council's thematic initiative "Cultural Literacy in a Multi-Cultural Society." Free admission, open to the public. Contact: NYCH, 198 Broadway, 10th fl., New York, NY 10038; (212) 233-1131.

## Films • Tapes Wanted

BROOKLYN MUSEUM seeks high quality single-channel video art by African Americans for spring 1990 series. Narrative, doc & experimental tapes, especially addressing issues of African Amer. self-representation, history & culture, requested. Length: up to 60 min. Send 3/4" or 1/2" tapes & SASE to: Dara Meyers-Kingsley, Public Programs & Media, Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn, NY 11238.

COMEDY CHANNEL, new basic cable service, seeks independently produced short films and videotapes for possible airing. Materials should not exceed 15 min. in length and should be suitable for general audiences. Submit screening tapes (VHS or 3/4") to Nina Hahn, The Comedy Channel, 1100 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036.

SOUTHERN CIRCUIT seeks artists for touring exhibition of ind. film & video. 6 artists will travel 9 days to 7 southern states & present 1 show per city. Send only printed materials, incl. resume & publicity for 1st round of selection process. Deadline: Jan. 15, 1990. Contact: South Carolina Media Arts Ctr., 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201, attn: Susan Leonard, exhibitions coordinator.

UNDERGROUND COMEDY: Weekly half-hr program featuring work of ind. filmmakers, videographers & animators seeks submissions. Contributors paid stipend & given on-screen credit. Contact: Editel/Boston, Underground Comedy, 651 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02215-3278.

## Opportunities • Gigs

FILMMAKER engaged in research for narrative film wishes to interview men aged 14-40 who were raised by an artistic mother, e.g., a writer, visual artist, dancer, etc. Please call (212) 533-3661 and leave name and number.

IMAGE PROCESSING RESIDENCIES at Film/Video Arts: open to NYS media artists. Appl. deadline: Dec. 15. For details contact: Peggy Carol, F/VA, Image Processing Residencies, 817 Broadway, New York, NY 10003; (212) 673-9361.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS seeks Administrator for Humanities Projects in Media. Responsibilities incl. full participation in administrative, financial, and program matters. Requirements: B.A. in humanities discipline (Ph.D. preferred) & 3 yrs professional exp. or graduate work in media. Salary: $34,580-$44,957. Deadline: December 30. Must submit Application for Federal Employment (Standard Form 171) & cite vacancy announcement #89-088. Forms & info. avail. through: Susan Sienkiewich, personnel, NEH, 100 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Rm 417, Washington, DC 20506; (202) 786-0415.

SONY CORP.'S Innovators Awards Program: Open to young Black film/video writers, producers, directors, makers & program developers & performers. One cash award & audio/video equip. awarded. Gala ceremony in NYC, March 1990. Deadline: Dec. 31; appls postmarked after Jan. 1 will not be considered. For entry forms, write, Sony Innovators Program, c/o Mingo Group, 228 E. 45th St., New York, NY 10017.

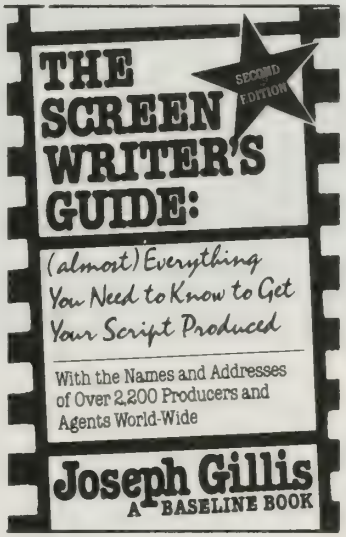
SPECTRUM COMMUNICATIONS: New African American-owned & operated 24-hr cable channel has job openings at all levels. In need of org. to build its prod. facility on Long Island. Contact: Clyde Davis, Spectrum Comm., 21 Bedford St., Wyandanch, NY 11798; (516) 491-7774.

## Publications

BOMBS AREN'T COOL: Media Network's new guide on


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## Resources • Funds

CORPORATION FOR PUBLIC BROADCASTING Open Solicitation for TV Program Fund, deadlines: Jan. 19 & Sept. 14, 1990. Contact: CPB TV Program Fund, 1111-16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036; (202) 955-5134.

EXPERIMENTAL TV CENTER Residency Program offers artists 5-day intensive residency to study video image processing. Imaging system incl. colorizers, keyers, frame buffer & Amiga computer w/ expanded memory & genlock integrated w/ patching matrix. Deadline: Dec. 15. Also Electronic Arts Grant Program provides finishing funds of up to $500 to NYS artists for completion of audio or videotapes, computer-based sound or image works & exhibition, plus small number of research projects aimed at advancing electronic arts. 3 appl. cycles/yr. Also, presentation funds to NYS nonprofits to assist w/ presentation of audio, video & related electronic art. 4 review cycles/yr. Contact: Experimental TV Center, 180 Front St., Owego, NY 13827; (607) 687-4341.

NAT'L COUNCIL ON FAMILY RELATIONS 22nd Annual Media Awards Competition recognizes videos, films & filmstrips on marriage & family topics. Video deadline: March 9; film & filmstrip deadline: Apr. 6. Contact: Nat'l Council on Family Relations, 3989 Central Ave., N.E. Ste. 550, Minneapolis, MN 55421; (612) 781-9331; FAX (612) 781-9348.

RHODE ISLAND STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS: Artist Development Grant, Artists Projects, Arts Programming & Org'l Development deadline: Dec. 1. Contact: RISCA, 95 Cedar St., Ste. 103, Providence, RI 02903.

SOUTH CAROLINA ARTS COMMISSION: Appl. deadlines: Artists Projects, Jan. 15. Contact: SCAC, 1800 Gervais St., Columbia, SC 29201.

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE: Grants Program for scholarship, educ., training & public info on int'l peace & conflict mgmt. Appl. deadline: Feb. 1. Contact: US Institute of Peace, Grants Program, 1550 M St. NW, Ste. 700, Washington, DC 20005-1708; (202) 457-1700; fax (202) 429-6063.

*Call to Entries*
**THE 32nd AMERICAN FILM AND VIDEO FESTIVAL**
Westin St. Francis - San Francisco
May 28 - June 2, 1990
***Deadline for entries: January 5,1990***

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***Eligibility:*** Any nontheatrical film/video production produced/released between January 1988 and December 1989 is eligible for entry.

Categories include, but are not limited to corporate productions, feature documentaries, music videos, experimental works, informational documentaries, adaptations and original fiction, student works and educational productions. Productions may be for any audience–children through adult and professional.

***For further information, contact:*** Kathryn Lamont, AFVA, 920 Barnsdale Road, Suite 152, La Grange Park, IL 60525. Phone (312) 482-4000. FAX: (312) 352-7528. Effective November 11, 1989 the area code will be (708).

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*continued from page 36*

baker, Jane Aaron, Norman Magden, and many others. But after a long period of shrinking grants, the funding has finally dried up. This summer the Showcase's sole supporter, the National Endowment for the Arts, notified SFS's administrator, the Foundation for Independent Video and Film (FIVF), that it would cease funding the program at the end of the current grant period.

Short Film Showcase was first proposed by director Robert Wise (*Sound of Music*, *West Side Story*, *The Andromeda Strain*) when he was serving on the National Council on the Arts, the NEA's advisory committee. Getting positive feedback on the idea from the leadership of the National Association of Theater Owners and the Motion Picture Association of America, the NEA established SFS in 1977 and contracted with FIVF to operate the program on its behalf. Its mission was to: "1) create a wider audience for short films by independent producers, 2) introduce to the public the creative short film innovations that have developed in recent years, 3) support quality short film programming in commercial movie theaters, 4) encourage new sources of film production by providing technical, marketing, and promotional services for those films sponsored by the Showcase."

In its early days, the Showcase staged national open competitions every year, selecting approximately 10 films to be added to its growing roster. The juries were often stellar line-ups; the first year, independent videomaker Ed Emshwiller, directors Francis Ford Coppola and Martin Scorsese, critic Pauline Kael, and exhibitor Richard Brand were flown to New York City to judge the entries. Winners received honoraria of $2500 to $3000. In addition, the Endowment funded all laboratory work—50 35mm release prints were struck of each short during the Showcase's heyday—as well as all costs for promotion and distribution. Hundreds of filmmakers rushed to take advantage of this new support. Out of the 700 applications and 300 entries or so each year, 10 filmmakers would be given honoraria and between four and 10 selected for distribution.

Theater owners and bookers for both the major circuits and independent cinemas in virtually every state also responded enthusiastically, learning about the program through print advertising, press releases, and preview screenings at the Show East and National Association of Theater Owners conventions. During the peak years, SFS's shorts appeared on well over 5,000 screens annually.

But in 1981, the first warning was sounded. While the numbers of screens and playdates were rising, so too were lab costs. Caught between this price squeeze on one side and a 38 percent cut in NEA support on the other, SFS began pulling back. That year it produced 350 prints—150 less than previously. As a result, it could no longer accommodate all the requests for bookings. Further, as project director Alan Mitoksy wrote to the NEA, "If the FY '82 shortfall is not restored by Congressional action or made up from other sources, it will not be possible to hold the annual national competition from which Showcase films are obtained."

Despite industry support in the form of bookings and praise, there were few in the film business who were willing to support it financially, even though the amount of additional assistance required was, relatively speaking, "negligible, like lunch for that group," says Sol Horwitz, who was SFS project director from 1981 to 1989. Every now and then help would arrive—$500 from Universal Pictures, gifts of rawstock from Movielab and Kodak. And there were the rare deals with major studios. After seeing Andy Aaron's *Street Scene*, a short in which Aaron stages a mock on-location shoot around the demolition of a high-rise building, 20th Century Fox decided to pair it with its feature *Eating Raoul*, paying for the additional prints. Says Horwitz, "It would have been our saving grace if everybody thought like that at the time. It could have been a solution." But for the most part, film companies and services were not interested in providing backing. Nor would they pay a rental fee for shorts—a point that was clear from the start and one reason for SFS's existence.

The competitions ended after 1983 and NEA support gradually shrank to about a third of its original level. This was enough to allow SFS to continue distributing the films it had acquired over five competition rounds, but without aggressive full-page advertising or promotion. For new titles, the Showcase turned to sources like the Smithsonian Institute (*American Picture Palaces*), the Directors Guild (*Precious Images*) and Writers Guild of America (*Words*), and cut the number of prints struck down to 15 from 50, which resulted in a waiting list for bookings.

"The Short Film Showcase was worth maintaining, but expensive to maintain," Horwitz concludes. "We consistently presented quality shorts in an industry notorious for its mixed quality." The Showcase's mandate to promote the distribution of independently produced shorts is as important today as it was a dozen years ago, saysLawrence Sapadin, FIVF's executive director. "FIVF will try to work with the NEA and other funders to find new ways to keep the art of the short film alive."

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# MEMORANDA

## MEMBERABILIA

Congrats to Bianca Miller, whose music video *Red M&M's* won third prize at the **Visions of U.S.** festival.

AIVF member winners of **Jerome Foundation Film/Video Grants**: Alan Berliner, Shu Lea Cheang, Nina Fonoroff, Su Friedrich, and Matthew Geller. Congratulations.

Kudos to **Nissan Focus** award winners Brian Fairlee, *My Friends, My Friends*, Marcia Ogrodnik and Sarah Durham, *Richard and Nicole*, and Mark Walton, *Jack in the Box*.

Congratulations to member recipients of **South Central States Regional Media Arts Fellowship Grants**: Tori Breitling, *Electric Village*; Van McElwee, *Distance and Refraction*; Enrique Trigo, *Ismael Rivera, a Puertorican Portrait* & Barton Weiss, *Geo Falls in Love*.

## SUMMARY OF MINUTES OF THE AIVF/FIVF BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

On September 16, 1989, the AIVF/FIVF board of directors met to elect officers and discuss priorities and goals for the coming year. Robert Richter was reelected AIVF president, and Dai Sil Kim Gibson was voted the new board chair. Skip Blumberg assumed the position of vice president and Dee Davis became the new AIVF secretary.

In order to strengthen the image of AIVF and provide a forum for members to meet and interact, the board discussed the possibility of a national conference and the feasibility of AIVF cosponsoring seminars outside of New York City.

Taking care of old business, the board reviewed the AIVF logos submitted by a new graphic designer and authorized executive director Lawrence Sapadin and board member Christine Choy to proceed with this designer in developing a new logo. The board also created an Advisory Board Revision Committee to review and update the association's Advisory Board. Sapadin described the role played by the AIVF Advocacy Committee in the creation of the Independent Television Service (ITVS). The board voted unanimously to accept and approve the ITVS articles of incorporation.

During staff reports, Sapadin reported that AIVF is researching a computer bulletin board to increase members' access to AIVF information and facilitate interaction between members. Sapadin also discussed the difficulties in finding a better and less expensive health insurance plan for members, but reported that the staff will continue to search for alternatives. The *FIVF Directory of Film and Video Production Resources in Latin America and the Caribbean*, compiled by Karen Ranucci, is now available, and Pearl Bowser is currently researching a second directory on African production resources. FIVF is also copublishing *The Next Step*, a book on distribution, with the Media Project in Portland, Oregon.

Sapadin announced the unfortunate news that the National Endowment for the Arts has ceased funding the Short Film Showcase, which will fold after 12 years.

*Independent* managing editor Pat Thomson showed the board a mock-up of the new *Independent* brochure, which will be used in AIVF's outreach efforts. Thomson also informed the board that *Independent* advertising representative Andy Moore is returning to California after Thanksgiving, adding that ad sales have risen considerably due to Moore's efforts and the search for his replacement is in progress.

Festival bureau director Kathryn Bowser reported that the London Film Festival accepted 21 of the 100 U.S. independent films she shipped to them. Bowser said she is gearing up to work again with Films du Femmes in Cretail this year and plans to go to France for the Reina festival. She is also working on a new AIVF guide to distributors.

Ethan Young, membership director, reported that although AIVF is gaining many new members, the renewal rate of current members is unacceptably low. The board decided to join the staff in its informal phone survey of lapsed members.

Morton Marks, finance director, reported that total revenue has risen due to book sales and special project grants.

Finally, program assistant Mary Jane Skalski reported on the successful third round of FIVF's Donor-Advised Film and Video Fund.

AIVF/FIVF Board meetings are public and AIVF members are encouraged to attend and participate. The next board meeting is scheduled for January 6, 1989. Telephone for time and location. For a copy of the full minutes, send a request with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: AIVF, 625 Broadway, 9th floor, New York, NY 10012.

## AIVF REGIONAL CORRESPONDENTS

AIVF has recently instituted a network of regional correspondents, who will provide membership information, hold meetings, and aid recruitment in areas of the country outside New York City. AIVF Members are urged to contact them about AIVF-related needs and problems, about your activities, and other relevant information and news:

**Howard Aaron**, associate director
Northwest Film and Video Center
1219 S.W. Park Ave.
Portland, OR 97205
(503) 221-1156

**Joyce Bolinger**, executive director
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* FIVF Board of Directors only

# PROGRAM NOTES

Patricia Thomson

## *Short Film Showcase*

When going to the movies these days, it's a rare and unexpected treat to see a short film play before the feature. While some film festivals and an occasional art cinema carry on the custom, most commercial theaters have impatiently waved it aside, preferring to squeeze in one more lucrative feature showtime per day or, more recently, paid advertising. Sadly, the age of shorts in movie theaters has come one step closer to extinction with the demise of Short Film Showcase (SFS) in October 1989. For over a decade, SFS has distributed shorts by independent filmmakers to theaters free of charge, introducing an estimated 40 million moviegoers to innovative works by such directors and animators as Jordan Belson, Maureen Selwood, James Whitney, George Griffin, John Canemaker, Stan Brakhage, D.A. Penne-

*continued on page 35*

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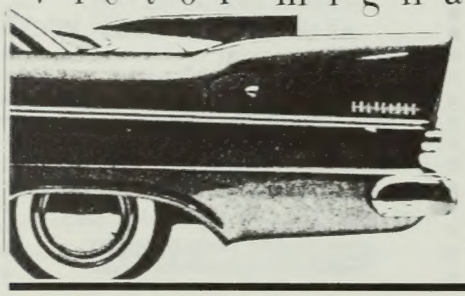
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